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www.kentnews.co.uk October 8, 2017

Mid edition No 785

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Friends' fury over Heath sex claims

Former PM's reputation on the line as police reveal findings

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You have to feel sorry for PM, but the end is nigh

NEVER let it be said that the Conservatives are a forgiving bunch.

If ever there was a political movement which knows how to gain and cling on to power, then the Tories are surely it. And, as a consequence, anything which threatens their electoral chances don't get much time to make amends.

Theresa May's speech on Wednesday was a fiasco on a scale which even the makers of The Thick of It would have deemed too far-fetched. Yet, in truth, none of it was of her own making. Unless, of course, she had taken to fixing the letters to the podium back drop pre-conference - but one assumes she had more important things to do.

Yet a combination of a cold, an intruder, and poor adhesion, left her looking utterly forlorn. Even Jeremy Corbyn must have felt just a twinge of sympathy, as he wiped the tears of laughter from his eyes.

Of course, when we spoke to the MPs of Kent, most were too wise to start slating their leader for fear of kissing goodbye to any future PM-appointed position, should she manage to stay on. Tom Tugendhat, the Tonbridge MP, demonstrated his manners by simply hanging up on us. And to think he is touted as a future leader.

But while they were all quick to deny any movement against Mrs May, the obvious fact is they must all be pondering just how she can really go on from here? A snap election disaster, sluggish Brexit negotiations, and a party so divided its all looking a bit like the 1990s again.

With politics, once the doubt has crept in, it spreads like a cancer. Just ask Tony Blair. And he was a man who led his party to three remarkable terms in office.

She's doomed and. let's be honest, everyone knows it.

Editor **Chris Britcher**

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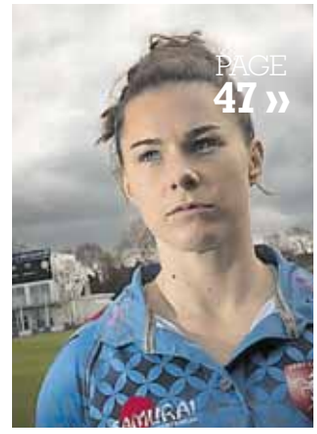
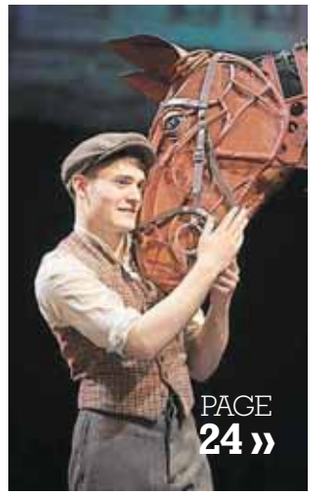
PAGE 11 »



PAGE 47 »

PAGE 31 »



PAGE 24 »

PAGE 14 »

PAGE 12 »

Contents

News

05 **Motorcyclist dies in crash**
The 49-year-old man was killed on the M20

06 **Author wins Nobel Prize**
Former uni student is given major honour

07 **So how did he get on?**
Did Alan Sugar warm to our Apprentice star?

09 **Jobs lost at Monarch**
Collapse of the airline and travel company has hit staff hard

11 **Do MPs still back May?**
Of course they say they do *cough*

12 **Ambulance report blow**
Health of service is still major concern

14 **Heath faces child sex claims**
Reputation of late PM faces damning claims

19 **School's told to change**
Grammar broke rules on its A-level admissions policy

PAGE 07 »

20 **Bolton on Ukip's future**
We speak to party's leader on his plans

The Arts

24 **We review War Horse**
As it confirms it will return to Canterbury

31 **Comic on life as a dad**
Ed Byrne ahead of two Kent stand-up shows

Plus

Letters ..... Page 38
Images of Kent ..... Page 39
Sport ..... Page 47

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Stories which made the headlines @kentnews.co.uk during the past week

Motorcyclist, 49, killed in horrific M20 smash

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

TRAGIC: The coastbound carriageway was closed for almost eight hours on Friday

A MOTORCYCLIST from the Folkestone area was killed in a horror crash on the M20 on Friday morning.

Officers were called to the scene of the smash, which involved the bike and a lorry, near junction 2 for Paddock Wood and Wrotham on the coastbound carriageway at around 6am.

Kent Police confirmed later that afternoon that the motorcyclist, a 49-year-old man, had died at the scene.

Police, Kent Fire and Rescue Service and the South East Coast Ambulance Service all attended the incident and the carriageway of the M20 motorway was closed between junction 1 for the M25 at Swanley and junction 3 for the M26 for almost eight hours.

The closure sparked traffic chaos across the county, with long queues and severe delays seen throughout the morning rush on both sides of the Dartford Crossing on the M25.

There was also another crash between Sittingbourne and Gillingham on the London-bound carriageway of the M2, which was carrying much of the traffic that was being diverted away from the M20.

Another incident forcing lane closures on the A2 near Gravesend further exacerbated the problems on the roads.

Officers are now appealing to any witnesses they have not yet spoken to regarding the M20 smash, to contact them.

Sergeant Hannah Brown said: "We would also like to speak to anyone who may have seen a black motorcycle or a lorry carrying a blue trailer in the moments leading up to it.

"If you have any information which may assist our enquiries please don't hesitate to get in touch."

Anyone who saw the crash is urged to call the force's Serious collision investigation unit appeal line on 01622 798538, quoting reference AH/DM/220/17.

Officers also confirmed that a second incident involving two further vehicles happened at the same location shortly after the collision involving the motorcyclist and the lorry.

This involved two vehicles and led to three people being taken to hospital.

None of the injuries were life threatening.

County council reveals £1.7m racked up in councillor expenses

SOME £1.7m of taxpayers' money was spent on allowances and expenses for county councillors last year, it has emerged.

The total spend on members' basic wage, plus various costs including public transport and a casual user allowance, came to £1,744,978 for the year between April 2016 and March 2017.

A report issued to Kent County Council's selection and member services committee reveals the spend is down by more than £22,000 on the 2015/16 figures.

However, despite the number of councillors being reduced from 84 to 81 following a boundary review ahead of May's election, that total is expected to rise substantially next year after councillors controversially voted to increase their basic allowance by some 15 per cent earlier this summer.

Opposition members branded the hike "disgraceful" and "preposterous" at the time, with Conservative councillor Jeremy Kite also expressing concerns, leading to him abstaining during the vote.

Defending the hike, council leader Paul Carter said members' pay "hadn't reflected the cost of living increases and pay increases that everybody else has had, except us".

According to last year's accounts, Cllr Carter took home the basic allowance of £12,805, plus a £42,109 special responsibility allowance - more than any other member on the council - while also racking up some £2,366 in expenses.

Fellow Tory Roger Gough, who is cabinet member for education, produced the largest individual expenses bill of £4,888 on top of his total allowances of £40,176.

The report also reveals nine councillors declared spending on taxis, with former deputy leader Alex King, who no longer has a seat at County Hall, racking up a total spend of £3,370.40 - almost double the spend of the other eight combined.

Teens charged as police probe 'cuckooing' of home

TWO teenagers have been charged with drug offences following the alleged cuckooing of a property in Gravesend.

Cuckooing is when the home of a vulnerable person is taken over as a base for people dealing drugs who commonly use intimidation, bullying and violence to maintain control.

It follows a raid by police on a property in Poplar Avenue on Tuesday afternoon.

Three people were arrested and a quantity of crack cocaine, heroin and drug equipement seied.

Two teens - aged 18 and 19 - were charged and will appear in front of Woolwich Crown Court on November 2.

A third man, 19, was released pending further enquries.

We need YOUR help for our Great Storm anniversary

DO YOU remember the Great Storm of 1987? Do you have a story to tell?

We are planning a special feature to mark the 30th anniversary of the storm which caused widespread damage across the county and would like to hear from anyone who can remember how it impacted on their lives.

Was your house or car damaged? Did neighbours unite to help those in peril? Do you remember the scenes of destruction that morning?

If you'd like to be included in the article, please email us directly at editorial@kosmedia.co.uk putting the words 'Great Storm' in the subject line.

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Stories which made the headlines @kentnews.co.uk during the past week

120 grenades blown up after garden discovery

A CONTROLLED explosion was carried out on a haul of Second World War grenades found in the back garden of a house in Sevenoaks on Thursday afternoon.

Some 120 phosphorous grenades were discovered in the garden of the property in Woodside Road.

Bomb disposal experts and emergency teams arrived at the location and neighbours were told to keep all windows and doors closed as a precaution while plans were put in place for a controlled explosion.

The Ministry of Defence's Explosive Ordanance Disposal team then dug a trench in a field opposite the property and the grenades detonated.

It, in turn, resulted in what fire crews described as a "large but managed" fire.

HGVs parked illegally to be clamped in fresh bid to prevent road blocking

By Tom Pyman
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LORRIES parking illegally on key roads and sites around Ashford will be clamped as part of the first scheme of its kind in the UK.

Kent County Council and Ashford Borough Council have joined forces as part of the scheme which will operate on the A20 between Charing and Ashford, Wotton Road, Ellingham Industrial Estate and the Orbital Park and Ashford Business Park in Sevington.

The project has been developed by working with the Department for Transport, which has agreed to change the current clamping policy for HGVs so that a clamp can be fitted for first time offences.

Although a ban on lorry parking has been in place at Orbital Park and the Ashford Business Park since 2004, enforcement was hindered by limited access to the registered keeper details of some foreign-registered HGVs.

This effectively meant that European collection agencies had to be employed to track down drivers and collect the fines.

TOUGH: Lorries face clampdown

Ahead of the launch on October 30, highways chiefs will advertise the scheme in multiple languages, while Kent Police will support the initiative in its first week.

Eurotunnel, Dover Docks and all nearby truck stops have been briefed about the order and its implications.

It emerged earlier this year that there were more than 5,000 cases of illegal and anti-social lorry parking in Kent in just 18 months.

KCC's cabinet member for transport, Matthew Balfour, said: "Under this new scheme we can clamp lorries that are flouting the ban, fine them and charge them to remove the clamp."

Ashford Borough Council's portfolio holder for health, parking and community safety, Brad Bradford, added: "Although there are many designated truck stops across the county, many areas in Kent – particularly Ashford – have experienced issues with overnight lorry parking on side roads and industrial estates.

"We hope this will benefit and improve the lives of our residents and businesses who are affected by lorries parking around our businesses parks and on this section of the A20."

WIN: Kazuo Ishiguro

Uni alumnus wins literature Nobel Prize

FORMER University of Kent student Kazuo Ishiguro has been awarded the 2017 Nobel Prize for Literature.

The writer of the Remains of the Day - which was made into a movie featuring Anthony Hopkins and Emma Thompson - was presented with the honour with the judges saying he " in novels of great emotional force, has uncovered the abyss beneath our illusory sense of connection with the world".

Born in Nagasaki in November 1954, he attended the university in Canterbury where he graduated in 1978 with a bachelor of arts (honours) in English and philosophy.

He then went on to spend a year writing before returning to study at the University of East Anglia. He became a British citizen in 1982.

The celebrated writer has previously received four Man Booker Prize nominations, winning in 1989 for the Remains of the Day.

Head of the school of English at the University of Kent, Professor Wendy Parkins, said: "We are delighted to hear the news and the university offers its warmest congratulations on his success. He is one of those rare writers whose work engages both our thoughts and emotions in a beguiling way."

MP backs bid to limit councillors' pay rises

A PLAN to limit pay rises for Canterbury councillors, "to prevent the greed of county council leaders seeping down to city level", has been backed by local Labour MP Rosie Duffield.

Labour members on the city council have proposed a motion ahead of a meeting later this month, calling on chiefs to ensure any future increases are at the same level of the public sector pay award, or the rate of inflation - whichever is lower.

It comes after KCC members controversially voted to hike their own allowances by some 15 per cent earlier this summer, in a move branded "disgraceful" and "preposterous" by opponents.

However, Conservative leader of the Canterbury City Council, Simon Cook, told us the motion was "pointless". He said: "In my history on the council, it moves in line with the staff, and in fact when we set the number of councillors, we had a recommendation on allowances, it seemed excessive, so it's actually lower."

MEP backs call for cameras on ferries

AN MEP has called for the installation of CCTV cameras on all passenger ferries, following the disappearance on a cross-Channel vessel of a man from Whitstable.

Richard Fernside was 30 when he failed to arrive in Dover after taking a ferry from Calais in May 2013.

It is feared he fell overboard.

They have long since campaigned for CCTV on passenger decks - something which the ferry firms have resisted claiming it would not be possible to monitor all cameras in real time.

But now Ukip MEP for the West Midlands, James Carver, has called for their introduction while speaking in the European Parliament.

Mr Carver said: "The lack of CCTV cameras on the ferry passenger decks left his family with many unanswered questions, not knowing whether Richard suffered an accident, took his own life or was even possibly pushed over board. His name is added to an increasing list of missing ferry and cruise ship passengers. I support his family's campaign."

Ghost hunters cause £50k wood damage

ONE of the most haunted spots in Britain - infamous due to screams heard in the night - has been vandalised by vandals and ghost hunters.

Dering Wood, in Pluckley, near Ashford, is a popular draw for those seeking out the paranormal, but now damage caused to the area has forced the Woodland Trust to stump up nearly £50,000 in security and clean-up costs.

And now it is urging those planning a visit later this month for Halloween to respect the area.

Over the last three years, the conservation charity has spent just under £41,000 employing a security firm.

Between 2012 and 2016 the trust has also spent £6,070 on regular litter picks, clearing away rubbish and cleaning or replacing vandalised signs.

Site manager Clive Steward said: "Dering has always attracted ghost hunters due to the noises that come out of the woods but the screams they hear are nothing more than amorous foxes. We want people to enjoy the woods, but to consider other users and treat the site with the care it deserves."

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You're fired: Lord Sugar boots out our contestant in week 1

By Luke May
luke.may@archant.co.uk

TV contestant Danny Grant got unceremoniously booted out of The Apprentice in its first episode this week after Lord Sugar told him 'you're fired'.

The 32-year-old, who runs an online cosmetics firm and plays football for non-league Chatham Town, was the first casualty of the show which returned to BBC One this week and was watched by more than 4.6 million people.

But father-of-one Danny Grant's hopes of winning the £250,000 investment from the businessman disappeared after he led the men's team in what Lord Sugar described as a "diabolical" first task of making and selling burgers in London.

He told KoS this week: "Before I went in I gave myself two rules, don't hide in the background, and don't be team leader on the first week, but when the moment came, everyone looked to me, so I took the chance."

And he was expecting some comments from his Chatham team-mates if he made the first team this weekend.

"I know I'm going to get some stick from the players at training and if I play at the weekend. But I would still do The Apprentice again. I wanted to win and think I would have won it had I got past the first week."

BOARDROOM: Danny Grant failed to convince Lord Sugar in The Apprentice

With his brief stint on television now over, the Rochester businessman has sights on a new business that could help some of those most in need.

He said: "By the end of the year I hope to get my first water filtration system ready to sell and be installed underneath sinks in homes.

"If that proves successful I want to start making a flat-pack, easy to distribute, filtration system that can be distributed to Third World countries, free of charge.

"My mum is from Brazil, she came from poverty to the UK and worked in the NHS for 25 years, now I want to give something back."

The Apprentice pits 18 contestants against one another with each hoping to be ultimately declared the winner and win the funding from Lord Sugar to create a 50-50 joint venture.

Each week they are set a team task, with at least one contestant being sent home each week for underperforming.

Tory party prankster to perform in county

SIMON Brodkin, the comedian who sparked a security review after handing Theresa May "her P45" during her conference speech in Manchester this week will be performing in Margate and Canterbury later this year.

The star, whose best known character is Lee Nelson, was led away in handcuffs after interrupting the PM claiming he'd been told to give her the P45 by Boris Johnson.

Jailed after drugs round stuffed in egg

A MARGATE drug dealer caught with a plastic egg full of heroin and cocaine has been jailed.

Elvis Stirkis, 20, of Norfolk Road pleaded guilty to possessing criminal property and two counts of possessing a controlled class A drug and was sentenced to 31 months in jail at Canterbury Crown Court.

Rogue caller warning

POLICE are urging residents in Sevenoaks and Tonbridge to be alert after reports of rogue traders posing as engineers from the water board.

In both cases the homeowner was distracted while their homes were searched for valuables.

Officers say they believe recent incidents in Tonbridge and Westerham may be linked.

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Major boost for school bus pass holders in east of county

SCHOOL children in Kent with a young person's travel pass can now use it for free bus travel in the evenings, weekends and during school holidays on Stagecoach buses.

The operator confirmed it was extending the use of the pass which had been restricted as costs to parents soared.

The pass, which once was free, now costs £280 for the year after Kent County Council was forced to make savings as its budget was slashed by Whitehall.

Another restriction imposed was that it was limited for use only for one return trip to and from school up to 7pm.

But now Stagecoach is extending the power of the KCC-issued pass up until August 31, 2018.

Philip Norwell, Stagecoach South East managing director, said "This means that students can stay late at school, or meet friends in the evening or at the weekend. They can travel anywhere on our buses in east Kent throughout the school holidays at no cost to the student nor the council - all such travel is provided free by Stagecoach. We think that this encourages young people to use buses."

Army hero set to take on Everest in charity hike

A DISABLED war veteran will attempt to climb the world's highest mountain next month to raise money for the Kent-based military and disability charity where he works.

Former Gurkha Anil Gurung was posted with the British Army in Afghanistan in 2009 where, just 20 days before the end of his tour, he stepped on an explosive device, resulting in the loss of his right leg below the knee.

The 29-year-old, originally from Nepal and now living in Maidstone, works in Royal British Legion Industries (RBLI)'s social enterprise Britain's Bravest Manufacturing Company, based in Aylesford – which employs more than 120 people many of whom are veterans and 60 per cent of whom are disabled.

Now Mr Gurung, who has won gold and silver for Great Britain in sitting volleyball at the Invictus Games, is set to return to his native country to take on the might of Mount Everest in a 10-day, 18,000-feet trek.

He said: "It will be a challenge for me physically and mentally. I am trying to build my muscles back up after taking time out after the Invictus Games and have been trekking across Kent and more recently in Snowdonia in Wales. But I need make sure I also am in the right state of mind.

"RBLI have been incredibly supportive of me since I first joined and that hasn't stopped with me taking on this challenge - they have been helping me every step of the way."

Water works to resume

THE final stage of a £155,000 project in Maidstone's water network is set to start on Monday and last three weeks.

Work will take place along Week Street, which will stay open for pedestrians and access to businesses will not be affected say South East Water chiefs.

Geldof fury at leaders

FAVERSHAM Live Aid hero Sir Bob Geldof has delivered searing criticism of a number of world leaders, saying he is "sick of them".

He said he "despised" Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin and China's Xi Jinping at the opening ceremony of the One Young World Summit in Bogota, Colombia.

Molly fundraising event

A FAMILY funday will take place at the University of Kent's Medway campus on October 22, to raise money in memory of Molly McLaren, 23, from Cobham, who was killed in a Chatham shopping centre car park in June. Funds raised will go to the Molly McLaren Foundation.

Oxfam trip to Greece

A GRAVESEND grandmother has returned from helping refugees and migrants camped in Greece.

Margot Edwards, 83, has spent 24 years volunteering at the town's Oxfam shop, and made the vist as part of the charity's 75th anniversary.

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Jobs go at Monarch crash

By Luke May
luke.may@archant.co.uk

DOZENS of staff in Bromley are losing their jobs after Monarch airline and tour group fell into administration.

The move immediately grounded all its air craft leading to flights and holidays of 860,000 people being cancelled.

It also triggered the loss of more than 1,800 jobs. At its Bromley office 59 of its 80 employees went home jobless on Monday.

Sales, IT and customer services workers based at its Wren Court offices were made redundant, while 21 HR workers were kept on.

A spokesperson from administrators KPMG said: "We've kept the whole HR team on to make sure we're able to provide as much assistance to other employees as possible and in other administrative functions which are being kept on to help administrators as we wind down the business."

The Civil Aviation Authority and the government are working together to deliver the programme to repatriat the 110,000 stranded holiday-makers.

Staff wept and embraced following a meeting at the airline's headquarters near Luton Airport on Monday morning.

The number of customers carried by the company rose 14 per cent in the last year but revenue was down £100 million, while adverse movement of the pound against the dollar had increased costs including fuel, handling charges and lease payments.

In a letter to staff explaining why management had placed the firm into administration, Monarch chief executive Andrew Swaffield said the "root cause" of the airline's plunging revenues was terror attacks in Egypt and Tunisia, as well as the "decimation" of the tourism industry in Turkey.

Administrators are now considering breaking up the company, which was founded in 1967, as no buyer has been found to purchase Monarch in its entirety.

The union Unite's national officer, Oliver Richardson, said: "Monarch's workforce has worked tirelessly and loyally, with great sacrifice, to try and turn the airline around in the last year.

"Their hard work has been undone by a government seemingly content to sit on its hands and allow one of the UK's oldest airlines go into administration."

GONE: The airline and holiday firm went into adminstration in the early hours of Monday morning

Chair quits hospital trust

AN interim chairman has been appointed at the East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust following the departure of yet another senior figure.

Nikki Cole is stepping down as chair having been in the role for two-and-a-half years - her exit coming just weeks after chief executive Matthew Kershaw left the trust, which manages the hospitals in Canterbury, Ashford and Margate to take up a position at a think-tank.

She will be replaced by Dr Peter Carter, a former interim chair of the Medway trust.

Leisure cente work begins

CONSTUCTION has started on the £26m Dover District Leisure Centre.

Local dignitaries conducted the ground-breaking ceremony at the 2.1 hectare site in Whitfield.

If all goes to plan, it should be ready to open in early 2019 and include an eight-lane swimming pool, sports hall, squash courts, gym, climbing wall and two 3G football pitches, Plus car parking for 250 vehicles.

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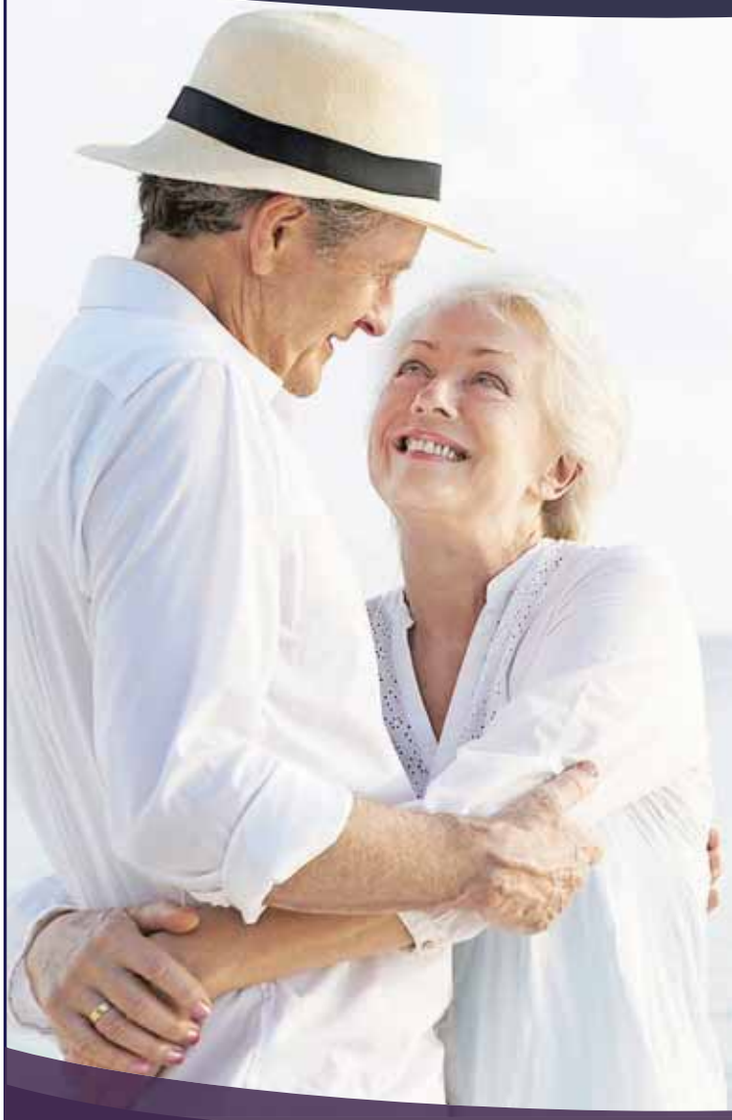

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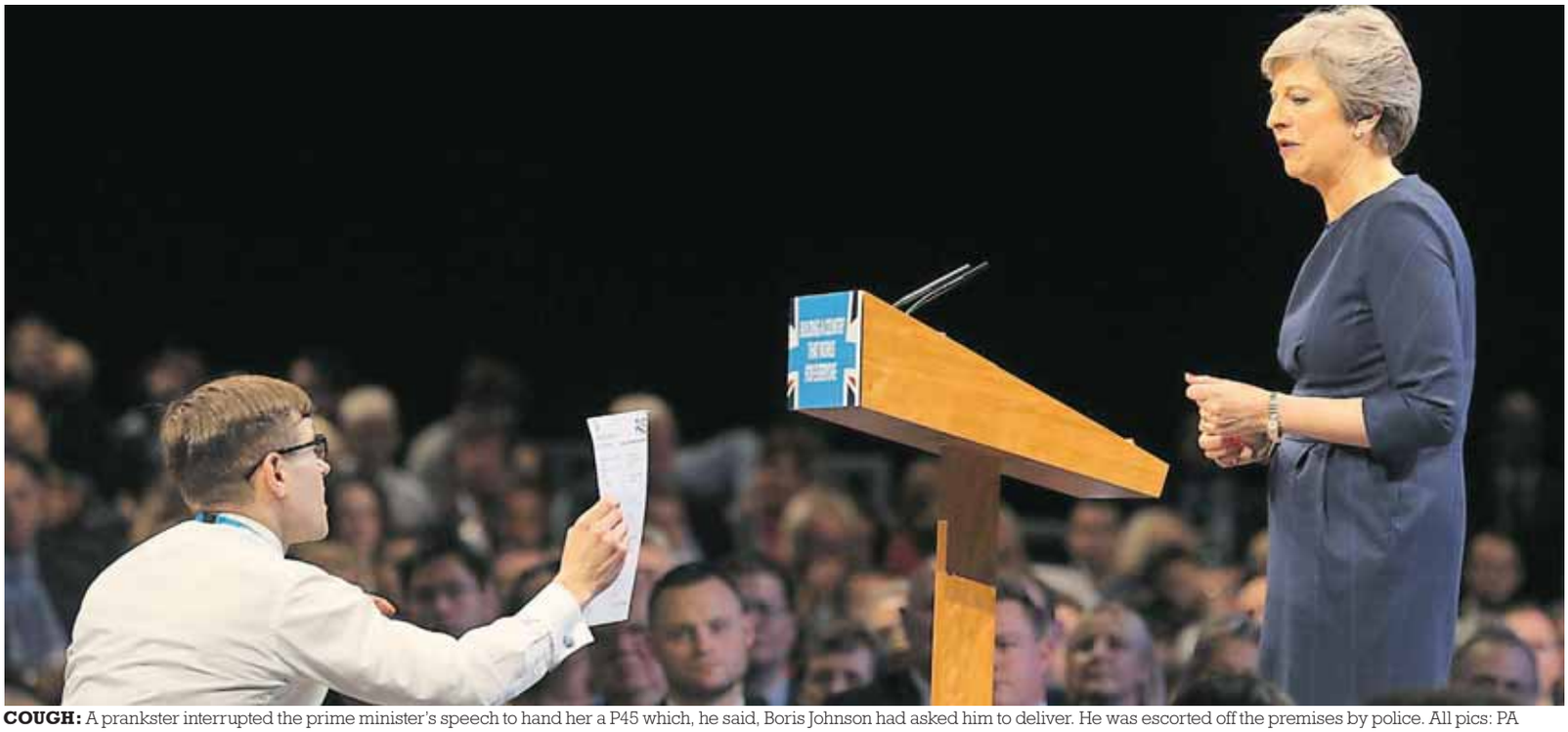

COUGH: A prankster interrupted the prime minister's speech to hand her a P45 which, he said, Boris Johnson had asked him to deliver. He was escorted off the premises by police. All pics: PA

Our MPs remain loyal to PM but pressure on her position grows

After 'that speech' Theresa May knows back-benchers are getting nervous about her future as leader

By Tom Pyman
Tom.Pyman@archant.co.uk

CONSERVATIVE MPs across the county have thrown their weight behind Theresa May after the prime minister endured a torrid week at the party's conference in Manchester.

Her keynote speech on Wednesday was marred by a series of unfortunate events, including a stage invader handing her a P45 unemployment notice, a cough repeatedly bringing her oration to a halt, and letters falling off the party slogan on the backdrop behind her.

And with foreign secretary Boris Johnson making headlines in the days leading up to the conference, in which he set out his own priorities for life in Britain after leaving the European Union, it again reignited speculation that her premiership was under threat.

Reports on Friday suggested former Tory chairman Grant Shapps was leader of a group of around 30 Tory MPs planning to send a delegation to Mrs May to tell her she must go. It is too few, however, to trigger any form of formal leadership challenge.

Mrs May, meanwhile, insists she has the full support of her cabinet and is continuing to offer "calm leadership".

None of the MPs KoS spoke to following the speech freely admitted that they had heard rumblings of unrest within in the Tory camp, despite suggestions to the contrary, however some were certainly more vocal and emphatic in their praise of Mrs May than others.

Damian Green has been a longtime ally to the prime minister and was effectively appointed as her number two following the snap election back in June.

The Ashford MP told us: "The mood is that she bravely battled through problems with her throat.

"We've all tried to give speeches with a cold before but never under that much spotlight so there's been natural human sympathy.

"But now it's all over we can concentrate on the substance of the speech which is more important to the future of this country.

"People are very supportive of her.

"She is absolutely the best person for the job, conference speeches come and go but the policies she set out in the speech are the right things for the country."

South Thanet MP Craig Mackinlay also backed the beleaguered Mrs May, telling us: "Everybody is sorry for the condition she was in, it was just unfortunate it happened when the eyes of the world were on her.

"I'm pretty well-connected in many circles but I'm hearing nothing [about doubts over her ability as leader].

"You've only got to look at Jeremy Corbyn who suffered a vote of no confidence last year and look where he is now - it's an entirely different landscape.

"People ebb and flow and she will flow again, of that there is no doubt. She is a fine prime minister with Conservative views to her core."

Charlie Elphicke of Dover, however, was significantly more coy in his version of events, when quizzed on the prime minister's future.

"People were saying they admire her resilience and getting through the speech even though she had a cold," he said. "We have a prime minister, there is no vacancy."

Asked if he was aware of any unrest, Mr Elphicke said he wasn't, but when pushed on whether Mrs May had his personal backing, he said: "I think she will stay prime minister for as long as she wants to."

The prime minister laughed off most of the problems during her speech and another of her key allies, business secretary and Tunbridge Wells MP, Greg Clark, insisted there was "huge warmth" for the prime minister and the poise she demonstrated in carrying on with her address.

"A lot of the people who were there in the hall and watching it on TV will have admired, frankly, the guts and the grace the PM showed," he said.

"One of the things that established itself very clearly was that the view of the party - of both parliamentary colleagues and activists - is that they regard, correctly, the responsibility of the Conservative Party to be effective and cool-headed in government.

"They have got no patience for distractions from that."

Others took to social media to demonstrate their support for Mrs May, with Chatham and Aylesford MP Tracey Crouch tweeting: "Just been to supermarket. People stopped me to say they supported the PM and for me to pass on best wishes. Their views count most."

Tom Tugendhat of Tonbridge and Malling added that the prime minister was "a natural leader" who showed "duty, dignity, persistence and vision".

Aside from Mrs May, the foreign secretary came in for heavy criticism during the week, particularly for remarks he made about Libyan city Sirte, which he claimed could become a new tourism hotspot.

"All they have to do is clear the dead bodies away," Mr Johnson said.

Faversham and Mid Kent MP Helen Whately, who insisted the prime minister has her "absolute" support, told us: "The general feeling at the conference was that it was unhelpful that he was getting headlines."

Mr Elphicke refused to be drawn on whether he was frustrated by Mr Johnson's behaviour, simply telling us: "Boris is a great charismatic figure, he is foreign secretary and we need all our best players on the pitch."

Mr Mackinlay, who was in hot water himself earlier in the week when he was branded "misogynistic" for encouraging jobless young men to come and work on Kent farms with "gorgeous EU women", stood by his fellow Brexiteer.

"He made that comment which may have been a bad choice of words, but I had something similar," he told us. "Some of us have more humour in our hearts than others.

"It's a pretty sad state of affairs if you can't make those kind of comments without being called a misogynist."

Asked if he anticipated a leadership challenge, Mr Mackinlay replied: "Not a chance," adding, "Boris is massively influential, he is popular as a frontman and long may that continue."

Ashford MP Mr Green added: "Boris has huge talents and is good to have in government but I think on the Libya issue, it's a lesson to us all to be sensitive in our use of language.

"The key thing is that he is signed up to collective government policy."

KEY: Boris Johnson remains a popular, yet divisive, figure

Health of our ambulance service still critical, claims latest report

The South East Coast Ambulance Service has been told it will remain in special measures after the latest review of its operation by the Care Quality Commission found it still needed big improvements

By Tom Pyman
Tom.Pyman@archant.co.uk

KENT's troubled ambulance service will remain in special measures despite improvements in performance, a watchdog has said.

South East Coast Ambulance Service (Secamb) has been hit by a series of scandals over the last two years, with particular concerns raised over the treatment of some staff.

An independent report published in August revealed hundreds of staff at the trust had experienced bullying and harassment.

The report told stories of staff having "only two tea breaks in three years", having instructions "bellowed as if they were a sergeant major in the army" and of employees being "genuinely frightened" about speaking out over bullying.

There was also a consistent view that a "boys' club" culture exists at the trust with "questions of sexual harassment and sexual grooming occurring in some parts of the Kent area".

Secamb was placed into special measures last September and while the Care Quality Commission, which recently carried out an inspection, recognises some improvements have been made, it says further progress is needed.

Inspectors looked at two core services; emergency operations centres which have been rated 'requires improvement' and emergency and urgent, including resilience and the hazardous area response team care which has been rated 'inadequate'.

The trust's overall rating of 'inadequate' remains unchanged, chief inspector of hospitals, Professor Ted Baker said.

The CQC also inspected the NHS 111 service, provided by the trust, which has been rated as 'good'.

At the CQC inspection in May 2016, it rated emergency and urgent care (EUC) as 'inadequate' and both the emergency operations centre and patient transport services were rated as 'requires improvement' and a warning notice detailing the areas where the trust needed to make improvements was also issued.

Inspectors found the trust had made some improvements to many of the concerns previously mentioned in the May 2016 inspection, particularly around reporting of incidents, and staffing levels during busy periods.

A new board was tackling the issues, it said, but further progress is still needed.

However, staff were found to be consistently compassionate, treating patients and callers with kindness and respect including those in mental health crisis.

PROBLEMS: Although steps have been taken to improve, the CQC says it needs to see "sustained improvements"

Although some staff did indicate improvements in the trust's culture and a reduction in bullying and harassment, there still remained concerns about the overall culture within the trust.

Professor Baker said: "Although we have seen some areas of improvement, South East Coast Ambulance NHS Foundation Trust has not yet made enough progress for me to recommend that it should leave special measures.

"I am concerned that the previous leadership had not fully addressed longstanding cultural issues and in particular the historical problems of bullying and harassment.

"While the problem is now being addressed there is still work to be done here and in the management of medicines.

"It is clear there have been deep rooted problems and the trust would now benefit from a period of stable management to address these issues.

"I am aware that there has been a recent appointment of a new chief executive who has considerable experience within the ambulance service and should bring that renewed stability.

"The board have assured us that they are focused in supporting the chief executive to carry out the improvements that are needed.

"In the circumstances however, I have advised NHS Improvement [which oversees NHS trusts] that the trust should continue to receive the additional oversight and support provided by special measures until such time we can report on significant and sustained improvement."

Responding to the verdict, Secamb chief executive Daren Mochrie said: "While I am disappointed that not enough progress has been made for us to improve our overall rating, I am confident that progress is being made and that this will continue.

"I believe that the pace of improvement has picked up since the CQC visit in May 2017 but I am very aware, as is our senior team, that there remains a significant amount of work to be done.

"Our updated improvement plan focuses on the areas where we are determined to make major improvements in the months ahead.

"We are working with our local commissioners to ensure that we are funded appropriately and have the right resources to meet the demand we are facing.

"Right across the trust, staff are working flat out to ensure the necessary improvements continue to be made and I am pleased that staff told inspectors that they feel more positive about the organisation and that we are heading in the right direction.

"There are some positives to build on. In recent months we have successfully delivered a number of key projects, including moving to our new emergency operations centre and HQ at Crawley [in West Sussex] and introducing a new computer aided dispatch system.

"The success of projects such as these will ensure we are providing the right foundation for a better service in the future."

Chair Richard Foster added: "The trust board acknowledges that not enough progress had been made since the last CQC inspection in May 2016.

"During that time there have been a number of changes at executive and at board-level and the leadership team now in place is committed to delivering the vigorous improvement programme already under way."

Secamb's woes have been compounded recently after its ambulances were targeted by crooks.

A number across the county have been hit, with life-saving defibrillators stolen so they can be sold on the black market.

Police are continuing to investigate the crimes.

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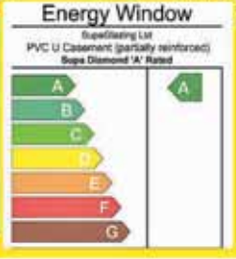

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Friends rally as former PM's reputation is dealt blow over 'sex assaults'

Damaging claims over rape and assault, which include a child as young as 10, would have seen the Kent-born MP interviewed under caution if he was still alive, police confirmed this week

By Rod Minchin
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

SIR Edward Heath would have been interviewed under caution to hear his account of seven allegations of rape and sexual assault - including one involving a 10-year-old boy in Kent - a controversial police report has said.

The claims, between 1961 and 1992, relate to a period when the former prime minister was an MP in Bexley .

Among the allegations is one from 1962, not reported until August 2015, which is said to have occurred in the county. It claims that in the company of an unknown male, the politician allegedly assaulted a 10-year-old boy during a chance encounter in a public place.

Born in Broadstairs and schooled in Ramsgate, the allegations have sparked a strong response for the former PM's friends who say the allegations do not tally with the man they knew.

On Thursday, a Wiltshire Police investigation, called Operation Conifer, concluded that seven of the claims would have been sufficiently credible to justify questioning Sir Edward, who was prime minister between 1970 and 1974, under caution.

A further 35 allegations - including the murder of children and satanic or ritual abuse - did not meet the threshold for a formal interview, the officers said.

The report does not address the question of Sir Edward's guilt or innocence because the remit of the two-year £1.5 million inquiry was to see whether there was enough evidence to interview the former MP, who died at home in Salisbury in July 2005, aged 89.

None of the allegations about which Wiltshire Police would have questioned Sir Edward relate to when he was prime minister, the force said.

The Crown Prosecution Service has a policy of not making a charging decision on a suspect who is dead because they cannot be prosecuted.

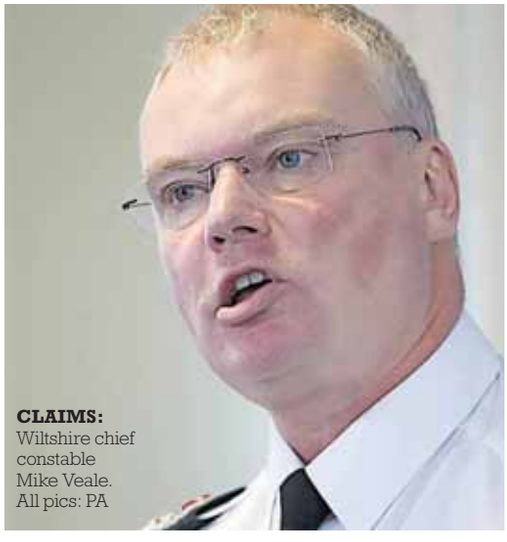
The allegations Sir Edward would have been questioned over include rape of a boy aged 11, indecent assault of the 10-year-old boy, and the indecent assault of a 15-year-old boy during three "paid sexual encounters", and are said to have occurred between 1961 and 1992 in the Met Police, Kent, Sussex, the Channel Islands and Wiltshire force areas.

Wiltshire chief constable Mike Veale said: "There have been many views expressed as to whether the police should investigate alleged offences committed by a deceased suspect.

"Notwithstanding the guidance, I believe this was the right moral, ethical and professional thing to do, but I appreciate that every case needs to be judged on its own merits.

"I am satisfied that there were compelling and obvious reasons to investigate allegations made about Sir Edward Heath.

"As I have said, Sir Edward Heath was an extremely prominent, influential and



CLAIMS: Wiltshire chief constable Mike Veale. All pics: PA

high-profile person who was arguably one of the most powerful people in the world commensurate with the political office he held.

"The allegations against him were of the utmost seriousness and from a significant number of people.

"I hope people will understand that, given these circumstances, it would be an indefensible dereliction of my public duty as a chief constable not to have investigated such serious allegations against a former prime minister, even though he is deceased."

Friends of Sir Edward Heath said the findings of the police inquiry had left a "cloud of suspicion" hanging over the former prime minister and called for a judge-led investigation, saying: "A man is innocent until proven guilty."

Former cabinet secretary Lord Armstrong of Ilminster and Lord Hunt of Wirral said everyone who knew Sir Edward were "convinced" the allegations of child abuse would found to be "groundless".

In a joint statement, they said: "The Wiltshire Police report is profoundly unsatisfactory because it neither justifies nor dispels the cloud of suspicion.

"It contains a summary of the investigation, but draws no conclusion as to Sir Edward's guilt, although during the investigation the chief constable was heard to express, as he certainly should not have done, his personal view that Sir Edward Heath was probably guilty.

"As Sir Edward is dead, justice requires that there should be a quasi-judicial process as a substitute for the judicial process.

"This could be in the form of an independent review by a retired judge, with unrestricted access to all the evidence collected by the Wiltshire Police.

"In the meantime, a fundamental, time-honoured principle should be respected, namely that a man is innocent until he is proven guilty.

"All those who knew Sir Edward Heath or worked with him are, without exception, convinced that the allegations of child abuse will all be found to be groundless.

"Everything that is known of his character, his habits, his intelligence and his principles supports this view.

"Everyone, alive or dead, should be entitled to justice, but this case is unique and because the allegations involve a former prime minister, this has national as well as personal implications.

"Sir Edward Heath's reputation should not be left in limbo. The allegations made to and the evidence collected by the police should be independently reviewed and an independent conclusion arrived at.

"That is the only way in which justice can be done."

Lord Hunt of Wirral is chairman of the Sir Edward Heath Charitable Foundation and a former cabinet minister in the Thatcher government, while Lord Armstrong of Ilminster is a former cabinet secretary who was principal private secretary to Sir Edward while he was prime minister.

Lord Macdonald QC, a former director of public prosecutions, accused police of "covering their backs" at the

Continued on page 15

PM: Edward Heath and Jimmy Savile during filming of Jim'll Fix It

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Continued from page 14

expense of a man who can no longer defend himself.

The 100-page 'summary closure report' details 42 allegations made against Sir Edward and categorises them as:

- Seven alleged victims whose accounts would warrant interviewing him under caution;
- Nineteen cases where Sir Edward would not have been interviewed under caution because of the extent of undermining evidence;
- Ten cases of third-party disclosures;
- Three cases of mistaken identity;
- Three complaints made anonymously.

Sir Edward was the most high-profile political figure to be linked to child sex abuse allegations that swept across Westminster.

A raft of politicians have been accused of abusing children, including Liberal Democrat Sir Cyril Smith and Labour peer and former MP Lord Janner.

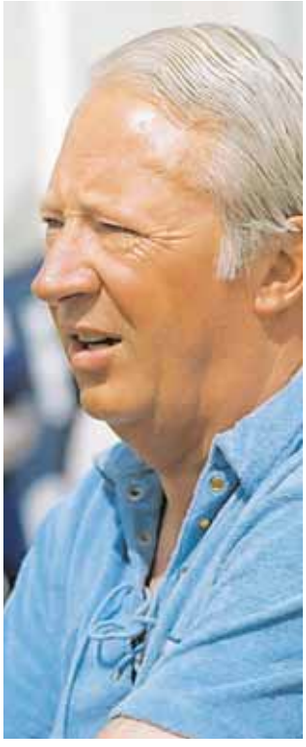
In a statement, Wiltshire Police said: "It is important to state that the role of the police in a criminal investigation is to the likely guilt or innocence of a person who is subject to allegations.

"Therefore, the findings in the report published do not state whether Sir Edward Heath was guilty of any criminal offences or comment on the prospect of a successful prosecution had he been alive today."

The report revealed that there was "reason to suspect" two people may have "intentionally misled" the police by alleging that they were abused by Sir Edward.

"In the case of one of these disclosures, a live criminal investigation remains ongoing," the report states.

"In the case of the other, a criminal investigation was undertaken and an individual was formally cautioned for an offence of wasting police time after they admitted that they had misled the investigation by making three separate disclosures, where they had purported to be three different people."



TED HEATH PROFILE

AS prime minister, Sir Edward Heath presided over some of the most turbulent years in Britain's post war history.

His time in Downing Street - from 1970 to 1974 - was marked by widespread industrial unrest with power blackouts and much of the country reduced to a three-day working week.

For his supporters, his crowning achievement was to negotiate Britain's entry into the Common Market, as the EU was then known - a decision that continues to divide Conservatives 40 years on.

His time in office ended ignominiously after he lost a snap general election which he had called to try to bolster his authority in the face of a second coal miners' strike.

He never forgave Margaret Thatcher for ousting him as Tory leader in 1975, for years nursing a grudge which became known as the "incredible sulk".

Sir Edward was born in Broadstairs in 1916 and attended Chatham House school in Ramsgate before studying at Balliol College Oxford, becoming president of the Oxford Union. He served with the Royal Artillery during the Second World War.

He had entered Parliament in 1950, as the MP for Bexley, and served in successive Conservative governments until 1964. In 1965 he became the first elected and first state-educated leader of the Tories and held the role for the next decade.

After losing to Mrs Thatcher, Sir Edward helped foster links between the West and Communist China.

In 1990 he flew to Baghdad and successfully negotiated the release of some of the 'human shield' hostages being held by Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein.

A lifelong bachelor, Sir Edward was famously reticent about his private life focusing his energies away from politics on his twin passions of sailing and classical music. He remains the only British prime minister to have won a major international sporting trophy whilst in office.

Sir Edward had a reputation of being cold and indifferent towards women.

One biographer concluded he may have been a latent or repressed homosexual while another thought he was "pretty well sexless" having failed to find any evidence of any intimate relationships with either men or women.

In 2007 Brian Coleman, a senior Tory on the London Assembly, caused a stir when he claimed it was common knowledge in Conservative circles that Sir Edward had been warned by police in the 1950s over his "cottaging activities".

However, no corroborating evidence was produced to support the allegation which was disputed by others in the party.

Sir Edward continued to sit in the House of Commons as the member for Old Bexley and Sidcup until his retirement in 2001 and was the father of the house between 1992 and 2001.

The Queen appointed him a Knight of the Garter in 1992 and he described the day of his inauguration as being "the proudest day of my life".

In 1985 Sir Edward bought Arundells, an impressive house in the shadow of Salisbury Cathedral, and following his death in July 2005 aged 89 he bequeathed the property to the Sir Edward Heath Charitable Foundation.

The house, garden and Sir Edward's art collection is now open to members of the public.

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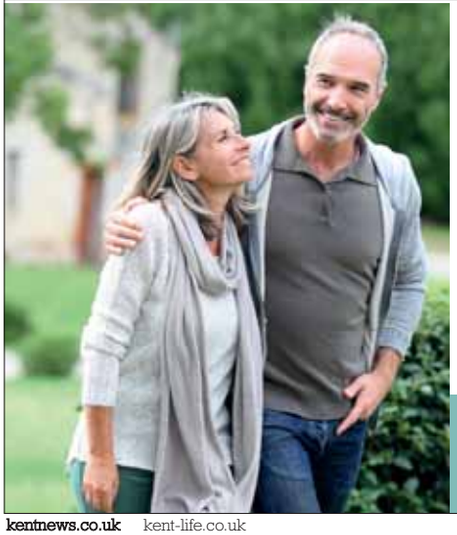

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School told to change 'unlawful' admissions policy by watchdog

One of the county's leading grammar schools has been told it must change the way it treats external applications to study on its A-level courses after intervention by the Local Government Ombudsman

By Tom Pyman

A GRAMMAR school operated an "unlawful" admissions policy for prospective sixth form students, a watchdog has found.

The Local Government Ombudsman investigated procedures at Maidstone Grammar School for Girls after a complaint was made by a parent, whose son missed out on a place at the sixth form last year, despite meeting the school's minimum requirements.

At the heart of the issue were claims the school only selected the highest performing students joining the school in the sixth form.

And it appears to contradict the school's motto - *non sibi sed ominibus* - which translates from the Latin as 'not for one, but all'.

The school's published admission policy states that students require six GCSEs at grade A* to C, including at least four B grades, and B grades in the the subjects they want to study at A-level.

However, it was also found to operate, for a number of years, an additional points-based system to admit students - a system which is not included in its published policy. Maidstone's Average Points Score (APS) is calculated by assigning points to each grade (A*=58, A=52, B=46, C=40, D=34, E=28, F=22, G=16, U=0) and taking an average from the applicant's predicated GCSE grades.

The school then uses the APS to rank all applicants and only makes conditional offers to those who score above a certain level, which in 2016 was set at 48 - an overall average higher than a B grade, therefore targeting students with significantly better predicted grades than the minimum set out in the admission criteria.

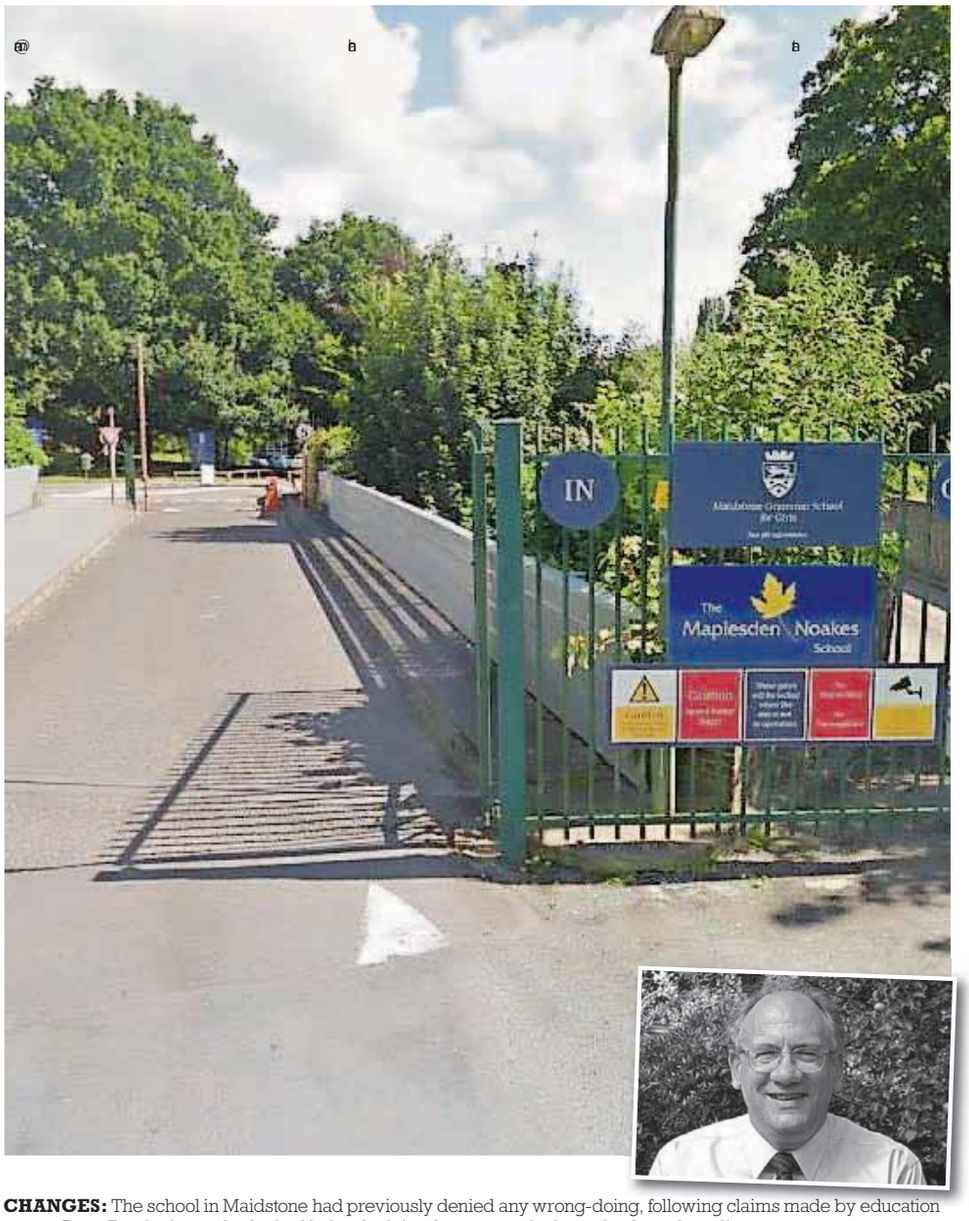
The ombudsman found the school did not make conditional offers to other applicants, even if they met the published requirements; instead placing them on a waiting list.

Maidstone Grammar says it has found using the APS is the best predictor of whether applicants will meet the entry criteria following their GCSE results.

The inspector's report noted: "The school did not follow its published admission arrangements when making conditional offers to applicants for September 2016 entry.

"It used an additional oversubscription criterion, which was not mentioned in the arrangements and had not been subject to consultation.

"Using an APS to rank applicants based on academic ability contradicted the published oversubscription criteria, which apply to all external applicants with the minimum academic requirements, giving priority to looked after children, siblings, students with health issues and finally those living closest."



CHANGES: The school in Maidstone had previously denied any wrong-doing, following claims made by education expert Peter Read, pictured, who had helped advise the parent who brought about the ruling

The ombudsman concluded that the student should have been offered a conditional place by March based on his predicted GCSE grades, however, the school would not have confirmed the place until he had his GCSE results, which ultimately were lower than predicted and therefore did not meet the subject requirements for his original A-level choices.

The report added: "The school will no longer use the APS to make conditional offers and will follow its published admission arrangements.

"The school must do this otherwise its admission process will be unlawful. If it wishes to use an APS as part of its decision-making, it must amend its published arrangements to reflect this and follow the statutory consultation process."

Kent County Council, which managed the independent panel which first heard the complaint, was also criticised, with the ombudsman reporting that further training for members was required - a recommendation agreed by County Hall.

Following the investigation, the school agreed to drop the use of the points system, apologise to the family and pay £250 in compensation.

Headteacher Deborah Stanley said: "The ombudsman specifically said that the pupil's grades were lower than predicted and he did not meet the subject requirements for his original A-level choices, or the revised choices put forward by his father. So, even if the school had made a conditional offer, it would not have followed this with a firm offer.

"However, we no longer include the average points score in our admissions criteria and also agreed with the ombudsman's recommendation of a £250 donation to the family, because of the uncertainty and confusion caused."

Former Gravesend head teacher and education consultant Peter Read, who runs the KentAdvice.co.uk website, had helped advise the family which brought the case.

A long-time vocal opponent of schools manipulating their admissions in order to be seen to be serving up strong results, he felt vidicated by the ombudsman's decision.

He said: "This complete shambles was initially brought about by the school operating unlawful admission criteria for external candidates to the sixth form, which have operated for some years.

"It was then compounded by the headteacher's reported refusal to admit fault when I demonstrated it very clearly, and the school's subsequent attempt to deny and cover up the illegality.

"The school then gave this false evidence to a supposed independent appeal panel that shut its eyes to the facts, through its support for the school against the appellants, which denied them a fair hearing.

"The process clearly inhibited potential candidates from pursuing their applications so, rather than expanding the sixth form towards its target, numbers actually declined. I do not have the data to differentiate between the number of internal and external students who joined the sixth form, but anecdotal evidence suggests there was a high leakage of members of Year 11 from MGGS to other local school sixth forms for 2017 entry. Surely, this must raise serious questions for the school management, especially as data for previous years suggests this may be typical.

"It is not possible to quantify the number of students affected, as it is likely that most turned down by the illegal process did not pursue their applications and were lost to the school."

The row comes just weeks after Orpington grammar, St Olave's, faced the threat of legal action from parents after students were told they could not continue their A-Level studies into Year 13 after failing to achieve B grades in any of their subjects taken in the first year of sixth form.

The school subsequently performed a U-turn and allowed the affected students to return.

Maidstone Grammar School for Girls and Invicta Grammar in the county town have also faced similar complaints in the past but have strongly denied any wrongdoing.

The Ukip fightback starts right here, says party's newly-elected leader

His victory a little over a week ago defied expectations, but Kent's Henry Bolton says his home county will be at the very heart of the party as it looks to dust itself off following some bruising election blows

By Tom Pyman
Tom.Pyman@archant.co.uk

KENT will receive "a lot of attention" from Ukip as it looks to launch a recovery in British politics, its newly-elected leader has claimed.

Henry Bolton defied the odds last week by beating off the likes of bookies' favourite Anne Marie Waters to clinch the top job at the party's conference in Torquay.

A former army officer and security expert, Mr Bolton lives in Folkestone and contested the county's police and crime commissioner election last year - ultimately losing out to Matthew Scott of the Conservatives.

He now faces the difficult task of uniting a party left almost completely in tatters following a series of high-profile defections, infighting and devastating election defeats off the back of the vote to leave the European Union last June.

Prior to its collapse, Ukip had built a strong level of support in Kent, claiming control of its first ever council in Thanet back in 2015, and becoming the main party of opposition on the county council two years earlier - though its representation at County Hall was completely wiped out when voters returned to the polls in May.

Speaking to KoS this week, Mr Bolton was keen to emphasise his responsibility to turn the party's fortunes around across the nation, but recognised the county as a strong starting point.

"We will of course be trying to exploit areas where we are best supported at a local level," he said.

"Kent will receive a lot of attention, not because I'm from here, but because we've got a lot of support.

"There will be a lot of discussions within the party, I need to know exactly where we are on a range of issues such as the finances.

"My priority is to get the party's structures and support mechanisms fit for purpose.

"At the same time I am starting to engage with various elements outside the party – other political parties both at home and abroad, think tanks, Leave campaign groups – and starting to map out the terrain."

Mr Bolton revealed he was putting together a large team of around 25 to 30 people to help implement the changes he pledged during his leadership campaign.

In the run-up to the vote last week, Mr Bolton was clear that Brexit was the party's "core task", and insisted it needed to stamp its authority on proceedings, with little progress having been made in negotiations with Brussels.

"Ukip has done very little over the last nine months so we need to start saying and doing things," Mr Bolton said.

"The Conservative government has shown a real lack of planning and preparation in working towards Brexit, nothing concrete has been done.

"We're supposed to be leaving in March 2019 but we keep kicking the can down the road.

"The centre of Ukip has been weak and the local level has been left without support and guidance."

Indeed, Mr Bolton was critical of Chris Wells' running of Thanet District Council last month, claiming he had "not covered himself or the party in glory" since surging to power two years ago and warned of a "disastrous" result next time around.

Cllr Wells dismissed the criticism, suggesting the new party leader needed to "hear a few home truths on understanding local government", though he has since offered Mr Bolton his support since the election.

Next year sees voters return to the polls in a number of local elections, including those in London boroughs, and Mr Bolton admitted he was look-

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ing to take a longer-term approach to reviving its local government presence - and that it may come at a cost in upcoming votes.

"This is about the future of the nation and making all our communities more optimistic, more confident and having a voice in shaping their communities," he said.

"If we have not got local government right, we are not going to get national government right.

"One of the things I will be changing is introducing long-term strategic planning.

"We have local elections coming up quite soon and it may well be there's not time for us to fully prepare.

"We're not going to throw all the resources at those elections because we have got to think longer term.

"It's possible we will take a hit in those elections but I want to make sure we are fit and resilient. We can't empty the bank accounts and exhaust everything.

"Ideally we'd still win those seats but the time window to turn things around is quite short.

"We will look at it and certainly be fighting vigorously in those elections but we are not going to break ourselves in doing so."

Since the prime minister's heavily-criticised Brexit speech in Florence recently, Mr Bolton claims to have witnessed a surge in Ukip membership, as well as a bounce following his election last Friday, which he believed signalled "a new sense of energy in the party".

One of those to welcome his victory was former leader, Nigel Farage, who also has ties to the county having lived in Westerham and stood for election in South Thanet.

PLANNING: Henry Bolton says he has held talks with Nigel Farage over the role the former leader should play in Ukip under his leadership. Pictures: PA

He acted as Mr Bolton's political referee in the run-up to the vote and described him as "a man of real substance" following his triumph.

Mr Bolton is clear he hopes Mr Farage will have a role to play in the party under his leadership.

"I've spoken with Nigel and we're going to have another talk this week," he said. "I have got some thoughts on that, certainly.

"He has moved on from leading the party, however he has strong views on Brexit and is recognised as national figure – he is probably more well-known than Theresa May."

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TREND transformations

Saddle up for a remarkable ride

REVIEW: By Chris Britcher
War Horse, Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury

TO SAY anything negative about the National Theatre's production of Michael Morpurgo's War Horse is akin to revealing a love of kicking kittens around your front room. In short, it's not the done thing.

After all, it has become something of a national treasure - a pioneering production for which its very stage craft has transended the frequently narrow confines of the theatrical arena and into the mainstream.

Think War Horse, and you don't start pondering about the magnificent creatures in Steven Spielberg's movie version, but, instead, the mesmorising life-size puppetry deployed to re-create the animals on stage.

It is the stage version which reinvigorated the book and inspired the movie. Even the author himself acknowledges that without the vision of the National Theatre's production, War Horse may well have spent its life plodding about in a backwater literary paddock.

And, all these years later, those horses remain just as breathtaking. Half close your eyes and the carefully constructed creatures are indistinguishable from the real thing. Take a peek when the audience's attention is elsewhere and those controlling them continue to keep them as life-like as possible - gently moving to give the impression of the mighty beasts' chests rising and falling when breathing, and that inquisitive look at the reaction of sounds.

There is no denying, War Horse is a triumphant stage production worthy of its plaudits.

Charting a young boy's path from a humble Devon farm and the bond he develops with a horse bought in an act of drunken bravado by his father, to the departure of both he and the horse to the bloody fields of the Somme during the First World War, it has become a story well known to millions.

While the horses steal the limelight, some of the staging is at times utterly spellbinding.

But, of course, for many of us, getting into London to watch the show can be an expensive business.

For that reason, we should all thank our lucky stars the Marlowe Theatre in Canterbury has developed a relationship with the National Theatre which sees it as the preferred venue for this very special anniversary tour.

Since opening on September 15, it has played to packed houses every night - and will continue to do so until October 14. Best of all, it's even galloping back in 2019 for another string of performances between February 27 and March 16.

We cannot, it seem, get enough of this landmark production.

But the question remains - look past the horse puppetry, does War Horse continue to enthral?

If you were to be particularly hard on it, you could argue the first 40 minutes is a little too 'look at these amazing horse puppets' for its own good, as it layers on the key story components which will come into play in the remainder of the show. With that initial awe-factor perhaps now a little worn out due to the pup-

IMPRESSIVE: The puppets dominate the production and the remarkable life-like portrayal of the horses is truly breathtaking. Just watch them move and breathe even when the audience's attention is elsewhere

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BRUTAL: Life on the frontline is portrayed in all its brutality in what can be a moving experience. All pictures: Brinkhoff/Moegenburg

RETURNING: The good news is War Horse will return to the Marlowe for more shows in 2019.

pets' widespread mainstream exposure, you could be forgiven for being, gulp, just a little underwhelmed by the pace of events and storytelling at the beginning. A victim, perhaps, of its own success and adoration.

Yet just when you're pondering if War Horse is something of a one trick puppet pony, it explodes into the most remarkable production.

Of course, that slow build up, that gentle rural pre-war reality which borders on the sluggish, is designed to contrast with the meat of the drama - life on the frontline of the Great War. The gentle rolling fields replaced by the metal and mud of the French killing fields.

So we go from canter to gallop in the blinking of an eye. Talking of which, some of the lighting effects for those war scenes are, literally dazzling. Without giving much away, there is a scene where one character dies where the stage craft of lighting, design, sound and execution unites in a manner which delivers a remarkably powerful emotional punch. In fact, it is one of those moments which is so well done, where horror is captured by almost a moment of theatrical beauty, that it will remain long in the mind as a way in which to visualise the brutality and immediacy of death in war.

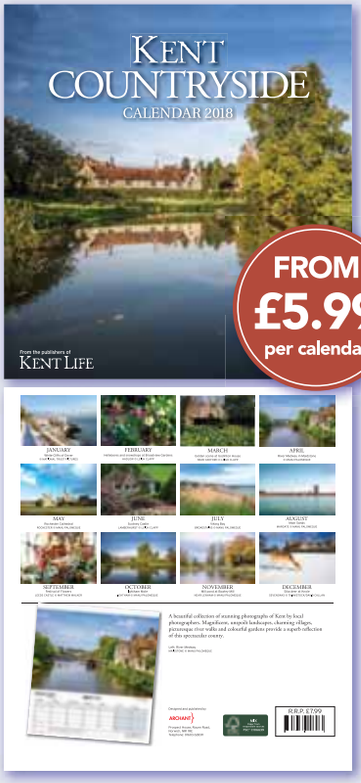
War Horse isn't the perfect production - there is a little element of treacle to the storyline which while essential to engage emotional attachment, does lessen its impact just a touch. But it is extraordinarily impressive.

Without seeing the horses in action, it is hard to truly appreciate their quality and as the actors took a bow and the inevitable standing ovation at the play's conclusion, it was only right the operators of those beasts got their own moment in the spotlight.

People often criticise theatre for not having the whizz-bang finesse of, say, cinema - of being unable to truly leave an audience spellbound. But War Horse achieves that through its sky high production values and a story arc which, while often a little telegraphed, has at its heart a simple story of friendship, compassion and bravery in the face of adversity.

Well done the Marlowe for getting this show and well done the National Theatre for such a remarkable piece of art.

Enjoy Kent all year...



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But failing to start thinking about your works outing or family and friends get-together now can leave many disappointed.

After all, how many times have you thought about staging a great meal out or group event only to find you've left things too late, the prices have rocketed and your choice is dramatically reduced?

So why not start planning your festive fun now - after all, there are plenty of venues with good availability right now and it means you'll get to book that memorable night out and have plenty of time to look forward to it and arrange it.

Plus there will be no excuse for people not to come if they're had plenty of advance notice.

From pubs and clubs, restaurants and hotels to golf clubs, there are so many great facilities which are perfectly suited to hosting your special Christmas knees-up.

You can expect decorated trees, crackers plus great food with all the trimmings - and by getting booked up now you'll be sure to get the venue and the date you're after.

Alternatively, why not sign up to one of the many specially organised Christmas events where you can join in with lots of other groups - giving you the best of both worlds; the chance to enjoy time with colleagues or friends, and then mingle with plenty of others too. What's more, they can provide great value for money - especially if you're organising a small company outing.

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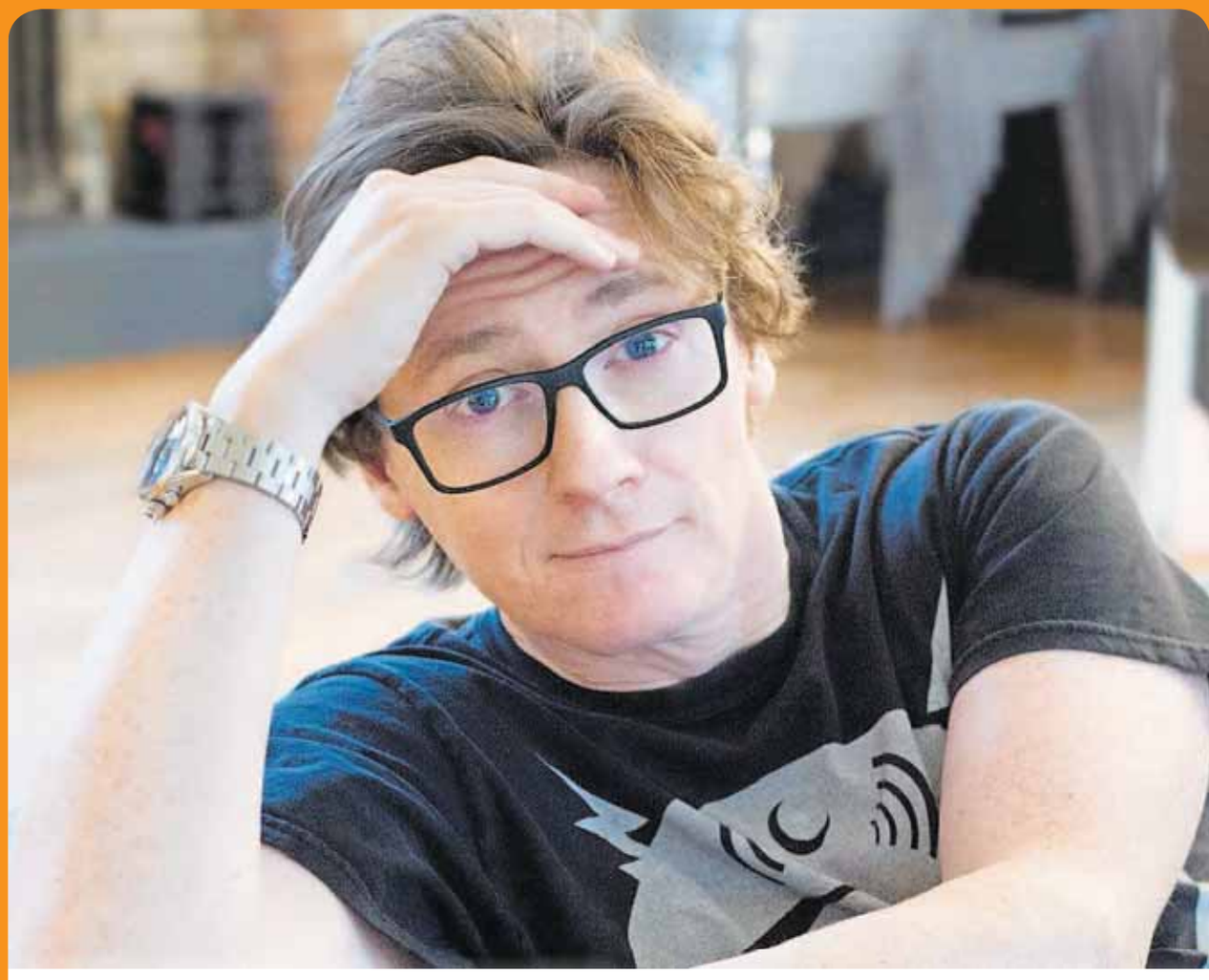

TALENT: Star of a host of TV shows, he hits the road from now until April. Picture: ROSYLN GAUNT

Byrne climbs up a hill of just how to be a perfect parent

Ed Byrne is touring extensively over the coming year with string of Kent shows

ED Byrne has been an acclaimed stand-up, with audiences and critics alike, for 20 years now.

His success with shows such as the Roaring Forties, Different Class and the 1998 Perrier-nominated A Night At The Opera led to him appearing on the box in the diverse likes of Mock The Week, Father Ted, The One Show and All Star Mr & Mrs, while his love of hill-walking resulted in him writing a regular column for The Great Outdoors magazine.

In fact, his love of natural history has crossed into television with appearances on The One Show (abseiling in Snowdonia), Countryfile (climbing Sgùrr Dearg, the 'inaccessible pinnacle' on Skye) and presenting items on Volcano Live (BBC). He is also co-host of the highly acclaimed Dara & Ed's Big Adventure and follow up Dara & Ed's Road To Mandalay, both on BBC 2.

As he prepares to launch himself upon the nation with another touring show, the Irish comic is firmly of a belief that the current breed of parents spoil their kids rotten whether it's to do with the ever-increasing size of garden trampolines, or his own kids' demand for elderflower cordial.

"My dad wasn't a bad dad," he says, "he was just a 1970s dad. I could never see my children ever again from this moment on, and I've already done more parenting then he did in my entire life. But, of course, I made a conscious decision that I was going to be an awesome dad. My wife will come back with tales from her friends of how awful their husbands are and she'll see me smiling and say 'alright, stop congratulating yourself just because such and such can't be left alone with their children for two minutes'."

In his new touring show, the perfectly-titled Spoiler Alert, Ed compares and contrasts the old-school child-rearing days with 21st century methods and suggests that there are different ways to learn how to be a mum or dad.

"I grew up in what I would call an aspirational household in that my parents bettered themselves over the course of my childhood," he says. "My mother was a radiographer and ended up a lecturer in radiography, while my dad was a sheet metal worker and went up to a supervisory role. I'd still say that you are expected to do a lot more parenting than our parents did and that's a weird thing because you tend to think that your parents are where you learned parenting from. But you don't, really, it's more that you look around you to see what's going on with other parents."

As well as stories about his two young sons, Ed weaves in routines about running out of petrol in the most awkward place imaginable, helping rescue an injured man in the Cairngorms, and the nation-dividing campaign and result of the EU referendum.

He's at the Hazlitt in Maidstone on October 17, the Gulbenkian in Canterbury on November 28-29, the the Assembly Hall Theatre in Tunbridge Wells on February 8, Dartford's Orchard on February 17, Folkestone Leas Cliff Hall on April 12 , Chatham's Central Theatre on April 18 and Canterbury's Marlowe on April 22.

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PAULINE, Sincere lady, 70s, GSOH, OH&C. Curvy with shoulder length dark hair. Varied interests, theatre and travel. WLTM similar minded gent. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428977**

SUSANNA, very attractive well groomed married lady. Works in London, can travel anywhere but cannot accommodate. If you are willing to meet on those terms contact me. I am 42yrs, brunette with a gym toned figure. **Text Only. Box: 4038007**

KATHERINE, 59yrs, slim, attractive petite lady, loves the countryside, happy with the simple things in life. Hoping to meet like-minded chap, any age. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428975**

MONICA, strict german lady, 32yrs, wanting to meet a submissive, easygoing gent of any age. South East/London only pls. **Text Only. Box: 4079865**

ATTRACTIVE lady, 44yrs, loves life, just missing a down to earth man. ACA/Text answered, contact me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428973**

AISHA, petite Asian lady, just 23yrs, living at home but hoping to meet a sophisticated, well travelled man to teach me the ways of the world. Pls be discreet as my parents are very strict. **Text only. Box : 4003844**

TABITHA, attractive well groomed lady, 32yrs, own house, good job, hoping for some naught text chat with older gent. **Text Only. Box: 4028177**

ATTRACTIVE lady, young looking 70s, retired nurse, hoping to find a nice gent for cinema, wining, dining, lives pleasures. I'm very kind and miss a mans pleasures. Please contact me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428971**

SHEILA, 64yrs, attractive lady with blonde hair, varied interests and GSOH. WLTM interesting gent. Looks unimportant, must have GSOH. Call or text me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428967**

STEPHANIE, super sexy black mamma, 55yrs young with curves in all the right places. Call me and you wont be sorry, we can have the time of our lives. **Text Only. Box: 4060220**

ATTRACTIVE lady, 45yrs, loves animals, music, socialising. If you have similar interests then call or text me. Lets meet up and spend time together. Looks unimportant, must have GSOH. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428811**

CANDIDA, 52yrs, married lady, very well educated with good looks and dress sense. Unappreciated by older husband and hoping for some fun with discreet chap. **Text Only. Box: 4010802**

TAKE a chance on me. Beryl, honest black lady. Seeking a gent 50-75 ish. who will treat me with respect. I will be respectful to you, mutual fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428809**

JOY, mid 50s independent lady, brunette, loves dining out, seeking gent of any age. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428373**

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KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3002 Box 419673**

MERRY widow, 64yrs, lonely and kind. Hoping to meet a kind gent, please call, you won't be sorry, I'm good company and will care for you. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428805**

MICHELLE, 44yrs, attractive lady, great company, hoping to meet mature gent 50+ for loving relationship. ACA/Text answered. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428803**

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. **Tel: 0906 515 3018 Box: 413399**

IF you want to meet a mature busty blonde lady then look no further. Call me, I'm interested in meeting a man who wants a physical relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428799**

EMILY, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent any age for no strings fun. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3022 Box 421375**

SUSAN, articulate interesting lady, 60yrs, loves countryside and music. Hoping to meet a genuine man of any age. All calls and texts answered. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428797**

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. **Tel: No: 0906 515 3010 Box: 409715**

TAMIKA, mature black beauty, hourglass figure and open minded. Pls call if you are discreet, broad minded and nice. I can travel and accommodate. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3006 Box 422365**

MARIA, young 54yr old, 5ft 8ins, medium build, blonde hair/brown eyes, likes swimming, walking, pubs and dining out, WLTM male 40-60 with GSOH who is honest, kind and reliable. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428609**

HARRIETt 42yrs, blue eyed brunette with long lets and decent curves! Looking for a cheeky adventurous man for fun only. I live alone so can accommodate and can travel. Discretion assured. ACA. Give me a try. **Tel: 0906 515 3030 Box 426205**

SAMANTHA, 35yrs, attractive brunette with own business, seeks adventurous gent for casual relationship. **Tel: 0906 515 3034 Box 425979**

HEATHER, 54yrs, slim brunette with petite figure, loves keep fit. Seeks chap for nights out, fun times, must be honest and kind. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428491**

VICTORIA, 46yrs, bubbly outgoing nurse, petite pretty brunette. WLTM N/S man, any age, must have GSOH and be kind. ACA. Or text. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428489**

CARMEL, open minded naughty lady seeks a broad minded strict man to unleash her wilder side. Age/looks unimportant but no time wasters please. **Tel: 0906 515 3042 Box 426851**

GENUINE lady 50yrs, independent, seeks genuine man, call to hear more about me pls. ACA/text answered. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428487**

CAROLINE, 42yrs, well educated, sophisticated "some call me posh" married lady, looking for no strings midweek liaisons. **Tel: 0906 515 3026 Box 427533**

ANGELA, attractive 66yr old free minded and spirited lady. Genuine with varied interests seeks gent 65+. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428485**

ANNETTA, 40yrs old seeks caring older gent 55+, you must be nice and enjoy my company. ACA/Text answered. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428483**

ARE you a gent with GSOH 60-70 and looking for some fun then call me, Leah, I'm 57yrs, slim, attractive and looking for fun. ACA. Or text me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428381**

MICHELLE, 28yrs blue eyed blonde with busty figure. I'm very mature for my age and hope to meet a man to care for. I'm willing to please. Call or text me and I will get straight back to you. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427649**

Men Seeking

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MALE, modern dresser, likes driving to the coast and different places, looking for someone 60-70, possibly who can drive same as me, just to go out and enjoy life and have a laugh. It would be nice to have someone on my arm and to bring flowers to. Call me and let's have a chat. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428771**

RICHARD, 55, looking for lady for outings, meals out, pubs etc. New to area and lonely. East Kent. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428631**

NICE looking male, 55, seeks mature female for fun, outings and friendship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 334975**

SMART Thanet male, 70, dark hair, brown eyes, 5ft5, OHOC, likes travel, countryside, the sea, walking, looking for an attractive local lady, for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428303**

WELL off man, wanting a young lady for spoiling. I am a sugar daddy looking for a sugar baby. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427441**

ATTRACTIVE male, dark hair, brown eyes, 5ft5, solvent, own bungalow and car, likes travel, countryside, seaside, walking, looking for attractive local lady for LTR. Thanet. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428127**

MALE, 42, married and bored, looking for adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428599**

GENUINE retired, mature widower, honest, kind and considerate, enjoys most things, walking, countryside, seaside, seeking a lady for LTR, just wanting to share my life with somebody special. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428023**

SOLVENT male, older but young at heart, looking for a young lady to wine and dine and spoil and pamper and in turn to pamper me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427443**

MALE, 55, WLTM a lady, 60-70, for discreet adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428039**

SINGLE dad of two, WLTM a single mum, for a proper relationship. Please get in contact I look forward to hearing from you. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427999**

JAMES, 43, genuine, witty, positive, kind and caring, loves travel, socialising, eating out and lots and lots of laughs with the right person, looking for genuine, friendly lady. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428019**

HI ladies, looking for either NSA fun or LTR. I am single/work/live in own house. **Text only. Mailbox: 4509325**

MALE 60, 6ft, blue eyes, broad shoulders, size 11 shoes, a real handful! Seeks a fit mature busty woman for fun times. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6001755**

THANET male, retired, 5ft5, dark hair, smart, OHOC, likes walks, travel in motorhome, looking for a single, attractive lady with similar interests in Thanet. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427557**

TALL, lively old boy, into red wine, garlic and Radio 3, seeks tactile lady for company and jolly jaunts. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425021**

MALE, 58, slim build, 5ft9, brown eyes, hard working, enjoys fishing and socialising, looking for no stings attached fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427173**

LOCAL 70 year old young male, now single, nice appearance and dresser, looking for fun and friendship with a lady, 55-70, possible holidays. Can travel. Please ring. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426897**

LIVELY mature gent, OHAC, near sea in Folkestone, into red wine, garlic and Radio 3, seeks lady companion/lover, 58-68 yo. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422621**

CARING, sociable male, 72, N/S, likes all types of music, walking, meals out, looking for a lady for friendship at first. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426865**

HARRY 50, ex soldier, 6ft, well built, seeking lady to wine and dine. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417015**

50YR old divorced white male, passionate, strong, seeking caring lady for romantic, loving relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418641**

BARRY, 50, 6ft 4ins, well built, divorced gent, looking to date calm and kind lovely lady. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421195**

GUY, 50, 6ft tall, calm and kind, good company, seeking lovely lady for good times and fun and loving. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425369**

JERRY, 66, brown hair, brown eyes, recently widowed, love to walk my dog, WLTM compatible lady for companionship and to see where things go. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426387**

MALE, 6ft, brown hair and blue eyes, warm and understanding, likes dining out and cosy nights in, lots of fun, friendship and holidays. Looking for a lady over 48. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426057**

KENT man, retired engineer, solvent, enjoys holidays, meals out, good conversation, WLTM a slim lady, 60-70, with a GSOH, to share these times and hopefully become friends. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426887**

RETIRED, smart, 68 year old, 5ft5, I enjoy eating out, walking, holidays and golf, WLTM a slim, attractive lady, 60-68, for a loving, tender relationship, to enjoy these times with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421853**

MALE divorced, 6ft, well built, seeking fun time girl for good times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412717**

LOCAL man, seeks lady for friendship possibly more, for romantic dates and good times together, hope to hear from you. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426195**

HANDSOME male, mid 40s, dark hair, hazel eyes, wishes to meet appropriate female for fun, friendship and perhaps more, please get in touch if interested. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422587**

EASYGOING male, 49, 6ft, well built, seeks female to wine/dine and have fun times with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 401401**

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MALE, 50s, likes to cross dress, looking for same for friendship and fun. Has to be discreet. **Text only Replies. Mailbox: 4623598**

JOHN, young at heart 65, bi male, looking for casual fun with likeminded male. Maidstone Kent area. Must be discreet. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 5657306**

GAY guy, medium build, likes outdoors, DIY, seeking slim, N/S guy for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 403267**

EASY going guy, 68, likes walks, books, seeks N/S guy for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411413**

ROB, bi-curious male, 55, seeks likeminded male, crossdresser/TV. Must be discreet. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426287**

MALE, 40s, seeking gym buddy to attend DW gym in the early evenings, similar age. Margate. **Text only. Mailbox: 5779191**

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Go Bac in time to relive the Rumours era of Fleetwood Mac

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

THE industry in tribute acts is showing no signs of slowing regardless of the age or longevity of those whose talent is being replicated.

Born from those impersonating the likes of the Beatles and Elvis Presley, today there are performers mimicking the live performances of everyone from Take That to Little Mix, Prince to David Bowie.

And while, it would be fair to say, many are something of a mixed bag, the attraction to a paying audience seems undimmed, as they play major regional venues.

Now the magic of classic Fleetwood Mac is heading to Faversham with a group which has not only won the endorsement of founding members of the group, but who seek to replicate the live performances of the band from their 1970s and 80s hey-day.

Fleetwood Bac have performed more than 600 shows around the world and head to the Alexander Centre in Faversham on October 20.

Praised by the likes of Mick Fleetwood, Stevie Nicks and Peter Green, the band say they have spent decades perfecting the sound from the group's classic Rumours era, along with the look, on-stage chemistry, and atmosphere.

Released in 1977, the album went on to sell more than 40 million copies worldwide and catapulted the band into global superstars.

Explains a spokesman for the band: "Fleetwood Bac have been rated by The Times newspaper as one of the UK's top five tribute shows with rave reviews in The Stage newspaper, endorsements from the UK's leading Fleetwood Mac fansites and even the official Stevie Nicks website.

"Fans also include original Mac bassist and biographer the late great Bob Brunning who joined the band several times on stage, and Peter Green's official biographer Martin Celmins. The band were honoured when original Mac guitarist Peter Green came to see them perform and were delighted to spend time with one of their heroes after the show."

Tickets for the show at the Alexander Centre in Faversham are on sale now, priced £14.

REVIVED: Fleetwood Bac have performed over 600 shows as the legendary group

Bolan recreated on stage

T.REXTASY have been touring in tribute to Marc Bolan and T. Rex for 25 years - and next month they hark back to the 1970s at the Woodville Theatre in Gravesend on November 12.

Tickets are on sale now.

Hills are alive for favourite

TICKETS for the touring production of the Sound of Music as it calls into the Assembly Hall Theatre in Tunbridge Wells have gone on sale this week.

The show, one of the best-loved musicals of all time, runs from February 27 to March 3 and features Lucy O'Byrne as Maria.

Down to Folkestone

COCKNEY duo Chas & Dave perform at the Leas Cliff Hall in Folkestone later this month.

The pair will perform all their well known hits at the show on October 28.

Tickets are on sale now.

Walk like an Egyptian

MAIDSTONE Museum's new gallery opens this month - featuring among its exhibits the only Egyptian mummy in Kent.

The museum has been refurbished and will showcase its Ancient Lives exhibition on the lives of everyday Egyptians and Greeks in what it claims will be an "immersive experience".

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Oh Geno! Star's Deal date

R&B star Geno Washington will play Deal's Astor Theatre on October 27.

Tickets for the show are on sale now and cost £19 or £25 to get VIP balcony seats for the performance.

Laughs are a Revelation

ASHFORD's Revelation is launching a new Revels Comdy Club on October 27.

The first show will feature comic Paul Kerensa, Rob Thomas, Bentley Browning and Ravi Holy.

Tickets are £10 in advance or £12 on the door.

Wonder of Stevie on stage

SIGNED, Sealed, Delivered promises a non-stop homage to the legendary Stevie Wonder when it comes to Chatham's Central Theatre on November 16, featuring the vocal talents of Lejaune Andre.

Christmas tree festival

SMARDEN hosts its biennial Christmas tree festival on December 8-10, with the best of those on display being voted upon by visitors to the event.

The keenly-contested competition takes place at St Michael's Church and will feature more than 30 trees.

Sweeney is Crazy For You on latest UK jaunt

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

CLAIRE Sweeney has been confirmed as the lead in a touring production of feel-good musical Crazy For You which plays at two Kent theatres next year.

She will take over the role of Irene in the national tour of the Watermill Theatre's acclaimed production, starring alongside Holby City and Waterloo Road star Tom Chambers and West End star Charlotte Wakefield.

The production heads into Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre and then Dartford's Orchard Theatre in January.

Described as "high energy, high kicking and gloriously glamorous", Crazy For You has a score from the Gershwin brothers' songbook. Mistaken identities, plot twists, heartbreak, happiness and a wealth of memorable tunes, including I Got Rhythm, They Can't Take That Away From Me, Nice Work If You Can Get It and Embraceable You, all feature in this celebration of the great Broadway musicals.

Best known for playing Lindsey Corkhill in Brookside, she has gone on to enjoy a varied television and stage career which has included playing Roxie Hart in the Chicago and Miss Adelaide in Guys and Dolls - both in the West End.

Tom Chambers proved a hit in the West End version of Top Hat and, in 2008, won Strictly Come Dancing.

Charlotte Wakefiled has won a host of Olivier Award nominations for performances in the likes of The Sound of Music at the open air theatre in Regent's Park and Spring Awakening.

Crazy For You is directed by the Watermill's artistic director, Paul Hart, with musical arrangements by Catherine Jayes who worked on the The Colour Purple on Broadway. It is choreographed by Nathan M. Wright and designed by Diego Pitarch.

Tickets for both Canterbury, running January 16-20, and Dartford, January 23-27 are on sale now. Visit marlowetheatre.com and orchardtheatre.co.uk to book and for more details.

HIT: Tom Chambers continues his run of success on stage

SHOWS: Performances will be in Canterbury and Dartford

The Fizz: Still searching for land of make believe

They've had a rollercoaster career, but stars of Bucks Fizz are still serving up diet of catchy pop tunes

IT'S 36 years since the original foursome delighted viewers across the continent with their skirt-ripping dance routine on the 1981 Eurovision Song Contest, but the remaining members of pop legends Bucks Fizz agree that nothing has changed.

Now re-branded The Fizz, original bandmates Cheryl Baker, Jay Aston, Mike Nolan and relative newcomer Bobby McVay (replacing Bobby G who took his former bandmates to court to win the rights to use the Bucks Fizz name) are returning to the spotlight with a comeback tour that promises fans a balance of, what Baker describes as, "nostalgia" and "new stuff".

Not that they've really been away that long, having regularly performed at festivals over the years.

The last two years have seen them back in the studio, working with acclaimed songwriter Mike Stock on brand new record, The F-Z Of Pop.

"We are a bit older," admits 63-year-old Baker, who lives in Tunbridge Wells, "but the music hasn't changed, the enthusiasm hasn't changed and the fans haven't changed - they've just got older with us."

"Everyone's getting older," adds Nolan, 62, who has a home in Thanet. "I think we've had a really good 36 years actually, really enjoyable. We have had some ups and downs like everyone else, but it has been more fun than anything else."

Recently offered £1 million to reunite with Bobby G for a TV documentary series, the original trio turned it down flat such is the animosity which still exists between them. So for now they continue to perform as The Fizz.

TOURING: The Fizz feature three of the original four members

While they have all been on and off the stage and screen over the years - not to mention the throwback Eurovision TV specials - it has been more than three decades since they brought their signature 1980s sound to some of Britain's most major venues. And a lot has happened since then.

There have been marriages, children and new branches on the career tree, with Baker especially becoming better known in recent years for her work as a television presenter, which included a stint on Celebrity MasterChef in 2012.

While their diehard fans remain as loyal and ever, mothers Baker and Aston confess their musical legacy is little more than an uncool hangover from a bygone era in the eyes of their own children.

On behalf of her teenager, Josie, 56-year-old Aston says: "She used to be a fan until about two years ago.

"There is a bit of bullying goes on at school about what her mum does ... they tease her.

"She's at that age where it's all got to be cool, but we're not really cool, are we?"

Rather than mourn for the good old days, The Fizz see it as the perfect opportunity to jump back into a gap in the market with another album due out in the new year and a Christmas single in the works.

Portillo's big night out

FORMER government minister, turned writer and TV presenter, Michael Portillo, will be talking about his life at a special event in Ashford later this month.

The man who was once tipped to become the next prime minister, will be appearing at Revelation on October 20 .

The event will be followed by a question and answer session with the audience. Tickets are on sale now, priced at £17.

Get ready for pop party

POP Divas Live rolls into Gravesend on October 23, with performers paying tribute to the likes of Katy Perry, Adele, Taylor Swift, Ariana Grande, Little Mix and Rihanna.

The show at the Woodville stars five performers imitating the superstars in what is described as a "non-stop pop party".

Tickets for the show, which starts at 6.30pm, are on sale now

Hislop in conversation

BEST-selling author Victoria Hislop will be in conversation at Tunbridge Wells' Trinity Theatre next Thursday, October 12.

The writer will appear to discuss her newly-published paperback novel, Cartes Postales From Greece.

Mrs Hislop lives in Sissinghurst and is married to the Have I Got News For You team captain, and editor of the satirical Private Eye, Ian Hislop.

Libertines prove a hit

REVIEWS of last weekend's By The Sea Festival in Margate were glowing for headliners The Libertines.

The band, whose Sunday night show was switched from Dreamland to the Winter Gardens, played a two-hour set to an appreciative crowd. The NME described the performance as "a relentlessly boisterous show" from a band who recently bought a local hotel with plans to turn it into a studio.

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It makes sense to raise speed limits

OF course the motorway speed limit should be raised [KoS 01.10], why are we lagging behind other EU countries - cannot British drivers be trusted?

Why would a country as sophisticated as Germany, allow much higher speeds on its autobahns, if it was so dangerous?

This has led to their car manufacturers creating some of the safest and most desirable cars in the world.

Perhaps it might lead to better lane discipline on motorways and certainly the faster you drive the more attention is paid to the road, instead of just looking at lorry wheel nuts as you creep pass.

While some of the speeds quoted in your article might be good for headlines, no mention is mentioned of prevailing traffic conditions.

On a deserted summer's morning motorway, in a suitable car, is it so bad to do some of the speeds mentioned?

Every year brings thousands more reduced or extended speed limits, yet nationally road deaths are up four per cent and are the highest since 2011.

Better to concentrate on how vehicles are being driven, than a mindless obsession for speed limits.

Kent Police's superintendent Phil Hibbens is quoted as saying: "Exceeding the speed limit is irresponsible, and speeding at 100mph or more is extremely dangerous."

Is he saying that his officers are driving dangerously when on duty and reach similar speeds?

Perhaps his instutitionlised view, is that all drivers are dangerous regardless of their experience or proven driving skills?

Terry Hudson,
Whitstable

But limits are there for safety

NO doubt you will have letters in your paper this week calling for increased speed limits following your article on speeding cars.

There are some people who seem to have no grasp on the fact that the faster you go, the less chance you have of avoiding any sort of obstacle in the road - be that rubble fallen off the back of a truck, a pedestrian or an animal not well versed in the ways of the Highway Code.

Speed limits are there to protect us from reckless behaviour from people whose only interest is getting from A to B quickly and no thought that there could be anything, or anyone, who may find themselves in their way.

P Sutton,
Tunbridge Wells

LETTER OF THE WEEK

Is a reformed EU the best way forward?

I AM probably taking my life in my hands here, because even broaching the subjects of Brexit or Manston aerodrome tends to bring out the resolute believers in both arguments.

I will admit to being sceptical on Brexit and like many English, not beloved of the EU commission either. I actually believe that may be the view of many of the electorate both here and in Europe.

I would be less sceptical if there had been a plan behind all the rhetoric of Brexit, but alas it seems we are floundering as the EU is not responding to the blandishments or threats made to it, which our negotiating team appear to believe will work in our favour.

The latest offer and here, I can hardly believe team UK can keep a straight face, is our steadfast support on defence, intelligence and diplomacy.

This from a government that has run down our conventional forces (carriers with no planes, destroyers with inadequate generators and armoured cars with duff engines) and has Boris Johnson as foreign secretary.

As for intelligence that may be true, but this is difficult to evaluate from the outside.

Perhaps if we accepted that, like any jilted partner, the EU feels upset and angry, we might find a way forward and get a deal which both sides can live with.

Europe is changing itself and that may be our salvation.

The Bombardier case shows that unless a good deal is struck, large countries like the USA will impose their will, irrespective of the World Trade Organisation; therefore the UK needs to mend fences or it may find key parts of its economy and sovreignty is decided and controlled in Washington or Beijing in an arbitary manner far worse, than the process led alleged iniquities of Brussels.

George Nokes
Dover

Brexit is answer not the problem

EVER since joining the Common Market, that over the past 43 years morphed into the European Union, we have been told by europhiles we are incapable of running our affairs without the assitance of this organisation.

The MP for Thanet North, Sir Roger Gale, goes so far as to say that without the EU we could not keep our hospitals open and our tomatoes would wither on the vine. A statement not worthy of reply.

He advocates an open door policy despite the fact the electorate voted to take back control of our borders. So much for democracy.

Control of our borders does not mean that foreigners would be barred from Britain, but they would be vetted to determine their suitability for residence here. There is nothing objectionable about this.

Such a policy would prevent criminal elements and others with bad intent from entering our midst.

No country, however well intentioned, can cope with unlimited immigration - commonsense tells us that much.

It was a mistake of mammoth propotions to open our borders to the population of the continent of Europe. Even the arch europhile Tony Blair now accepts this.

What is objectionable here is to be told by MPs and others in thrall to the EU, that the British are "unwilling to work hard".

However, it is not without humour when one considers that MPs have more leisure time than Bertie Wooster - paid for from the public purse.

All self-respecting nations put the right to govern themselves above all. Tens of thousands of our countrymen died to ensure we remained a sovereign state. It was a betrayal of them when we handed our sovereignty to the totalitarian European Union.

Now we have voted to leave the EU, it is incumbent on Theresa May and her ministers to get on with carrying out the democratically expressed will of the electorate.

Robert Muir,
Westgate on Sea

Are you devoid of compassion?

T WATSON's letter on live exports and Brexit was a stupid comparison [KoS, letters, 17.09].

The writer of that letter needs to do more research before putting pen to paper. Farmers do not "need" to export live animals and to say so is a load of rubbish.

Anyone condoning live animal exports, whoever that person may be, is devoid of any compassion. We are talking greed, with money, as usual being the root cause.

Those in favour of this long standing, vile trade, should put themselves forward to join one of the hell on Earth trips. Form an orderly queue behind T Watson and remember your camera.

Remember too Jill Phipps, who gave her life years ago protesting. An unsung hero.

Mary McNulty,
Brenchley

No one will miss the Goodwins

THE Goodwin Sands 'we'll miss then when they've gone'?! {KoS, letters last week].

Have the writers who think it's so terrible to use a little sand of a sandbank any idea of the difficulty of navigating in the Thames Estuary? All over the world thousands of ships in the past foundered on rocks and coast, so should they all be turned into heritage sites?

Lesley Jameson,
Faversham

KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles

Kent on Sunday will:

1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
3) Be written in clear, concise English.
4) Not be overly sensational.
5) Have a sense of humour.
6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
8) Highlight topical issues of concern to people living in the county.
9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.
10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.

images of kent

Hay bales in Sheldwich

by **Victoria Tythe from Ashford**

To see your photograph printed, email **editorial@kosmedia.co.uk**,. Be sure to include your name, address and a contact telephone number. Unfortunately we cannot return any prints, and please do not send negatives.

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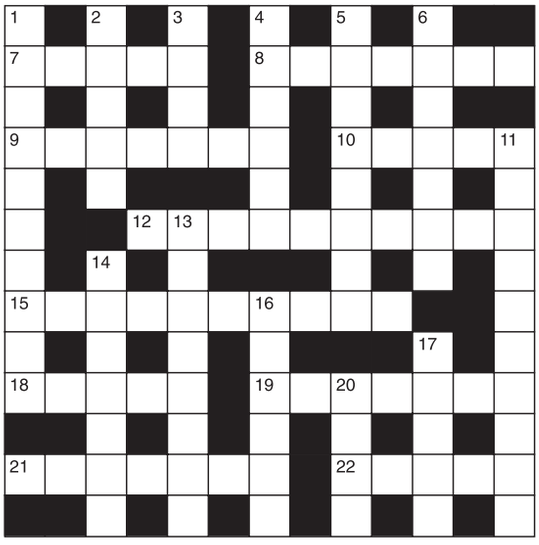
PUZZLES

DOUBLE CROSSWORD



Quick

Across

7. Madness (5)
8. Beware! (4,3)
9. Precisely (7)
10. Worth (5)
12. Styptic (10)
15. Gossip (10)
18. Memorise (5)
19. Nomad (7)
21. Superintend (7)
22. Fat (5)

Down

1. Detached (10)
2. Informer (5)
3. Divide (4)
4. Instrumentalist (6)
5. Persuade (8)
6. Rock (7)
11. Pleas (10)
13. Monotony (8)
14. Thick jersey (7)
16. Count (6)
17. Fluctuate (5)
20. Increase (4)

Cryptic

Across

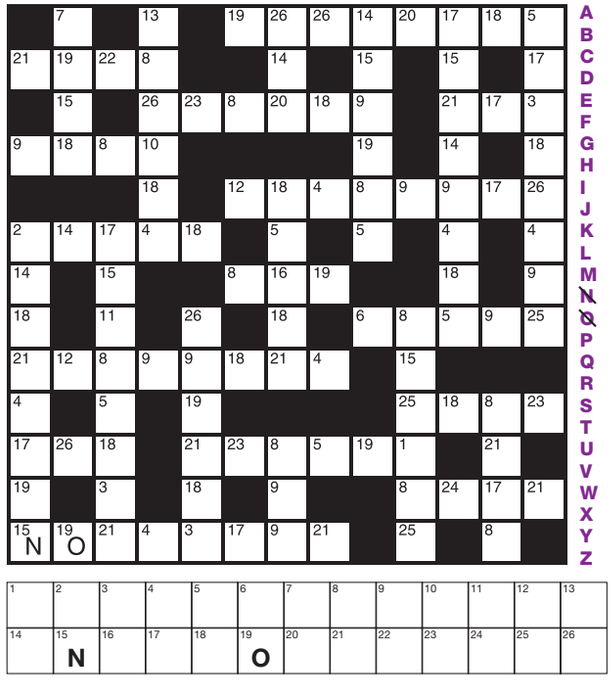
7. Liquor taken by graduate to dance (5)
8. Country labourer gives vegetables to worker? (7)
9. Meat with no veins minced (7)
10. Drain different currency (5)
12. Closely guarded knowledge about the ocean? (4,6)
15. Badge taken from garment that wouldn't reach the legs? (4,2,4)
18. Give weapons again to 1000 at the back (5)
19. Victory by monarch with one eye closed (7)
21. Not uniform in fortune, qualities etc. (7)
22. That doctor should back a team is self-evident truth (5)

Down

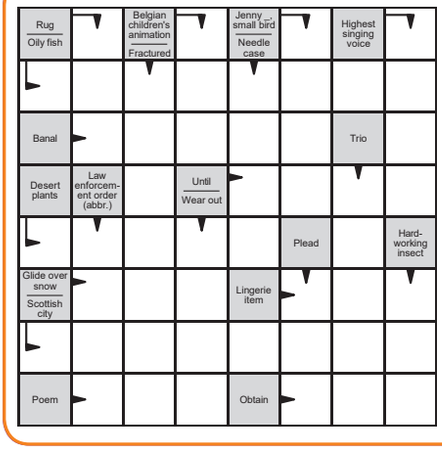
1. Transport for the ordinary soldier? (7,3)
2. Alter final part of telegram (5)
3. Free ticket allowing father on ship (4)
4. Unlock the door to freer speech? (4,2)
5. Made yard untidy in reverie (8)
6. Apparently the French have wet washing (7)
11. Hand back hunting bag at second leg match (6,4)
13. So big could give us no more (8)
14. Appearing nude in awful act in floor show (7)
16. A woven fabric produced just when one wants (2,4)
17. I am seen in illuminated boundary (5)
20. Simple but attractive without water (4)

CODEWORD

This puzzle has no clues. Instead, every number printed in the grid represents a letter, with the same number always representing the same letter.
For example, if 8 turns out to be a V, you can write in V wherever a square contains 8. Using your knowledge of words, complete the puzzle.



Arrowword



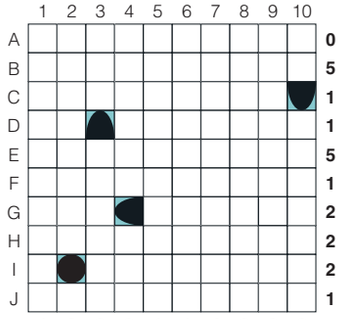
Enter your answers in the direction indicated by the arrows.

Battleships

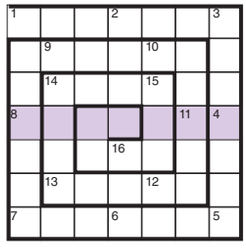
Find where ships shown below are hidden in the grid. The numbers to the right of and below the grid indicate how many of the squares in that row are filled in with ships or parts of ships. The ships do not touch each other, even diagonally. Some of the squares have been filled to start you off.

THE FLEET

1 x Battleship
2 x Cruiser
3 x Destroyer
4 x Submarine



Word Spiral



Starting from 1, fill in the grid clockwise with four-letter words. The last letter of each word becomes the first letter of the next to reveal the key word in the shaded boxes.

1. Mass of bread
2. Movie
3. Temperate
4. Blunt
5. Heavy metal
6. Percussion instrument
7. Legend
8. Stop
9. Care for
10. Soft feathers
11. Close
12. Lion's cry
13. Chessman
14. Slay
15. Endure
16. Notify

Keyword clue: A country

SUDOKU

Hard

			5			2		
		4			6	3		
				3		9	8	
2					1	8		6
	5						9	
4		1	9					3
	6	7		8				
		2	6			4		
		3			2			

Easy

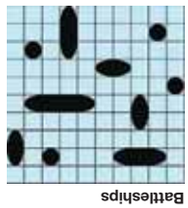
	6	7		3		4		
		9			1		6	7
2				4				3
7		2		5			9	6
	3	4	1		2		8	
8	5				7			
			9	8			5	4
5	2		6			8		
		8		7		6	3	

Solutions

Arrowword

	M		U		W		A					
M	A	C	K	E	R	E	L					
T	R	I	T	E		T						
		A		U	N	T	O					
C	A	C	T	I		H						
S	K	I		B	R	A						
A	B	E	R	D	E	E	N					
	O	D	E		G	E	T					

Battleships



Double Crossword

Cryptic
Across: 7 Rumba; 8 Peasant; 9 Venison; 10 Dinar; 12 Deep secret; 15 Coat of arms; 18 Rearm; 19 Winking; 21 Unequal; 22 Axiom. Down: 1 Private car; 2 Amend; 3 Pass; 4 Open up; 5 Daydream; 6 Laundry; 11 Return game; 13 Enormous; 14 Cabaret; 16 At will; 17 Limit; 20 Neat.

Quick
Across: 7 Mania; 8 Look out; 9 Exactly; 10 Value; 12 Astringent; 15 Newsmonger; 18 Learn; 19 Migrant; 21 Overseer; 22 Obese. Down: 1 Impersonal; 2 Sneak; 3 Part; 4 Player; 5 Convince; 6 Boulder; 11 Entreaties; 13 Sameness; 14 Sweater; 16 Number; 17 Weaver; 20 Grow.

Codeword
1=W, 2=O, 3=R, 4=T, 5=D, 6=B, 7=Z, 8=A, 9=L, 10=K, 11=V, 12=M, 13=J, 14=U, 15=N, 16=G, 17=I, 18=E, 19=O, 20=P, 21=S, 22=F, 23=H, 24=X, 25=Y, 26=C

Word Spiral
1 Loaf; 2 Film; 3 Mild; 4 Dull; 5 Lead; 6 Drum; 7 Myth; 8 Halt; 9 Tend; 10 Down; 11 Near; 12 Roar; 13 Rook; 14 Kill; 15 Last; 16 Tell. **Keyword:** Holland

Sudoku - Easy

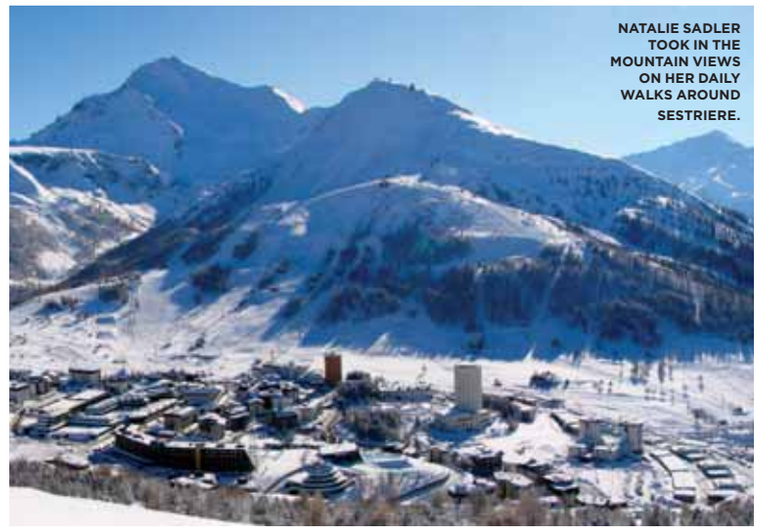
1	6	7	5	3	9	4	2	8
3	4	9	8	2	1	5	6	7
2	8	5	7	4	6	9	1	3
7	1	2	4	5	8	3	9	6
9	3	4	1	6	2	7	8	5
8	5	6	3	9	7	1	4	2
6	7	1	9	8	3	2	5	4
5	2	3	6	1	4	8	7	9
4	9	8	2	7	5	6	3	1

Sudoku - Hard

1	3	8	5	7	9	2	6	4
7	9	4	8	2	6	3	1	5
6	2	5	1	3	4	9	8	7
2	7	9	3	5	1	8	4	6
3	5	6	2	4	8	7	9	1
4	8	1	9	6	7	5	2	3
9	6	7	4	8	5	1	3	2
5	1	2	6	9	3	4	7	8
8	4	3	7	1	2	6	5	9

The year I forgot to do Christmas

Natalie Sadler enjoyed a white Christmas in an Italian ski resort instead of turkey at home...



NATALIE SADLER TOOK IN THE MOUNTAIN VIEWS ON HER DAILY WALKS AROUND SESTRIERE.

Christmas is over-rated. There I have said it.

I am not really a fan of turkey, I despise the excess consumerism and I hate the over-indulgence. So last year, while everyone else was wrapping last-minute presents, searching for parking spaces at Tesco or fighting over the last light-up Christmas tree jumper in Primark, we were headed for the Italian ski resort of Sestriere.

We were greeted by unprecedented snow fall which guaranteed us a white Christmas and, being the first week of the season, they were fairly quiet, even on Christmas Day.

So alluring were the slopes that on Christmas morning my step-daughter shunned her scaled-back pile of gifts and asked if it was time to go skiing.

The resort is part of the Milky Way ski area. From Sestriere you can ski to neighbouring Claviere; the lively Sauze D'oulx and even nip over the border to Montgenvre.

But there was a snag, this time around I was leaving the skiing to the other members of my family while I was grounded in the resort thanks to my burgeoning baby bump.

It was heart-wrenching seeing such perfect conditions and not being able to board but I looked at it as an opportunity to uncover the hidden delights of this quiet Alpine village.

Sestriere offers many restaurants, cafes and shops plus a municipal swimming pool, several spas and even an ice rink (though out-of-bounds for me too).

The pool is a 10 to 15 minute walk from the Hotel Du Col where we stayed, and was basic but clean. Entry was just a few Euros.

From the hotel, you can meander to the lower area where the ski schools meet and where the former Olympic village apartments are. If you are first-time skiers, the trip down can be a challenge. A hotel in the lower part of the resort would work better for younger families.

But more competent skiers can glide out of the hotel and zoom down to the first lift to take them straight up into the mountains.

I made it my mission to walk down and back at least once a day, enjoying unspoilt mountain views and stopping occasionally to sample the delicacy that is Italian hot chocolate.

The rooms at the Hotel Du Col had been refurbished and were pristine, airy and spacious. Breakfast and dinner were buffet-style and food was plentiful, if a little mass-produced.

The attentive waiters make a fuss of all the children and spotting our nightly battle to encourage ours to eat, they offered to cook anything she wanted and even made her fresh pasta. That kind of service you cannot fault.

Wine and soft drinks are served with the meal but choice is limited so if you are sticking with the lime and soda, take one with you from the bar.

Dessert time was a fanfare, with a procession of kitchen staff carrying it in while guests literally rushed to join the queue.

For reference, afternoon tea is also included in the package but it failed to impress and we preferred to save space for dessert.

Just outside the back door is a great sledging and play area.

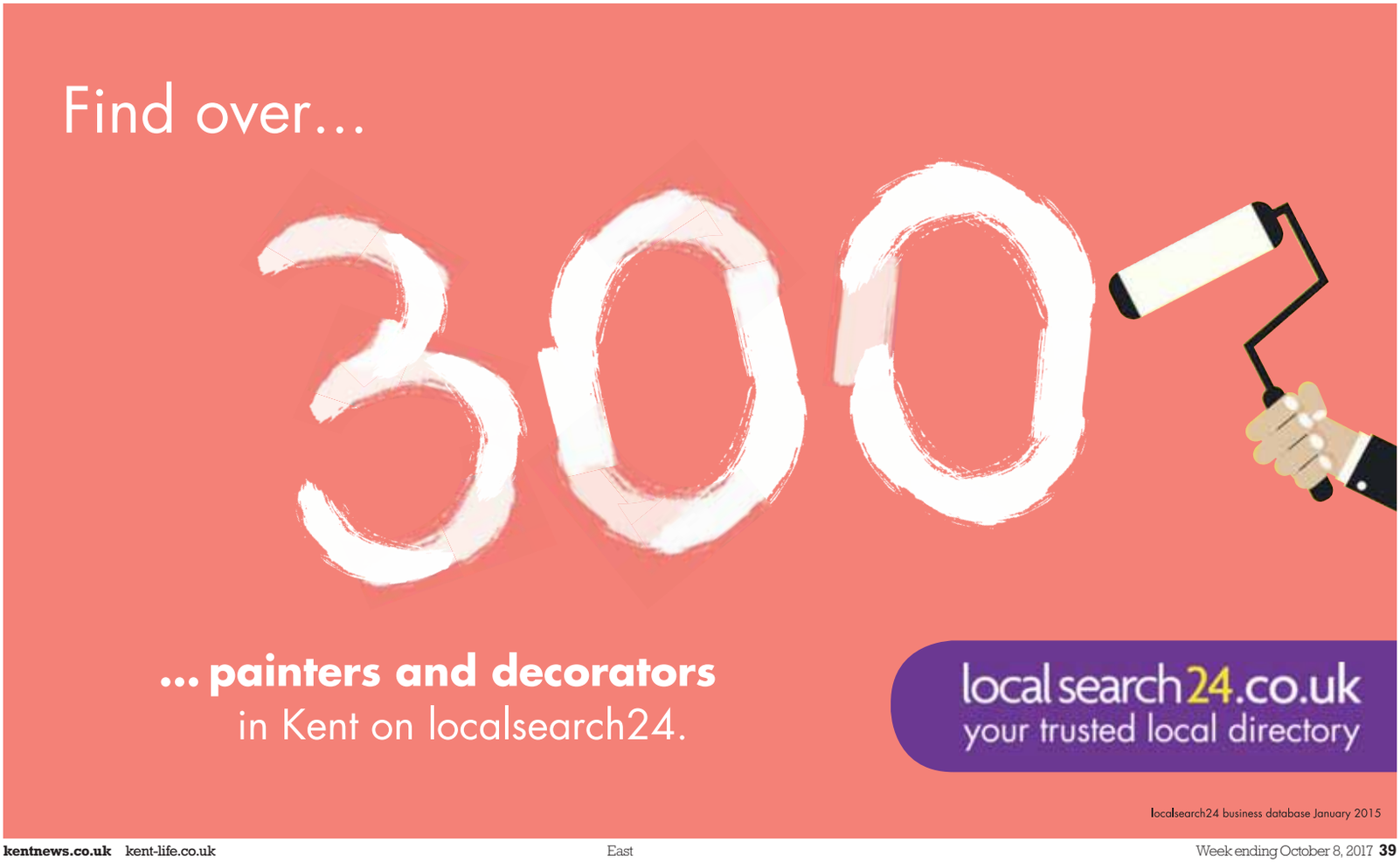
On Christmas afternoon a mass snow ball fight was organised (I think my husband may have been responsible) and the scene was like something from a cheesy American movie with new friends teaming up to build arsenals of ammunition before launching their assaults on the enemy.

It was the antithesis of everything I hate about a traditional British Christmas and proved that kids don't need half a toy shop to keep them busy – a fresh dusting of snow and a bum board will do.

Fancy Christmas in Italy? Crystal Ski Holidays (www.crystalski.co.uk; 020 8610 3123)

The company is offering a week's half board at the four-star Hotel Du Col in Sestriere from £679 per person (based on two sharing) including flights from Gatwick to Turin and transfers (price given is for departure on April 8, 2018).

Direct flights available from all major UK airports.



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Isle of Wight Sounds of the 60s Carry on New Year Party

Warner Bembridge, Isle of Wight
Friday 5 January, 2018 • Quote: BE1-KOS

GN Holidays & Voyages are taking over Warner's Bembridge Coast hotel again in early January 2018 - our 10th year in a row. Our must-do annual party, for over 40s only, has guests returning year after year to 'Carry On' celebrating the New Year. With a packed entertainment programme featuring original 60s bands Union Gap UK and The Cufflinks plus The Beached Boys, Vicki Lambert's tribute to 60s divas, great food, Free drinks from 6pm to midnight nightly, and free car ferry crossing, a great start to 2018 is assured.

INCLUDED: Free drinks 6pm to midnight every night - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & pumped mixers • Full entertainment programme • 3 nights standard en-suite chalet - upgrade to main hotel building from £30pp • 3 breakfasts & 3 dinners • Free car ferry crossing • Free parking

3 nights half board PLUS from £259pp

Suffolk 60s Seaside Party

WARNER LEISURE HOTELS

Warner Corton, Suffolk Coast
23 February, 2018 • Quote: CO2-KOS

The beautiful Suffolk coast is the location for Corton Coastal Village which has all the easy atmosphere of a holiday home, and the creature comforts Warner is famous for. Built on a chalet theme, the rooms have clapboard design, with fresh pastel interiors, and many have terraces overlooking the sea. Our 60s Sounds party weekend - for over 40s only - is packed with entertainment. We've lined up a brilliant showbill featuring 60s bands Union Gap UK, the New Honeycombs and Roy Carter (ex-Drifters & Foundations). With non-stop entertainment from Friday evening to Sunday evening and free drinks every night, this is going to be a party weekend to remember.

INCLUDED: Free drinks 6pm to midnight every night - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & pumped mixers • Full entertainment programme • 3 nights en-suite chalet - upgrades available • 3 breakfasts & 3 dinners • Free parking

3 nights half board PLUS from £269pp

Bringing On Back The 60s & 70s Party

Warner Lakeside, Haying Island
20 April, 2018 • Quote: LK4-KOS

GREAT entertainment, good food and a setting in 32 acres of grounds near the sea make Warner's Lakeside resort on the South Coast perfect for a spring getaway. Entertainment includes New Amen Corner's new show Bringing On Back The 60s plus a tribute to Abba and more. Add FREE drinks from 6pm-midnight and an allocated table for dining and entertainment that's yours for the weekend and this is one party you won't want to miss. Over-40s only.

INCLUDED: FREE bar 6pm-midnight every night – selected branded beers and spirits, house wine by the glass, selected soft drinks and mixers • Full entertainment programme • 3 nights standard en-suite chalet accommodation – upgrades available • 3 breakfasts and 3 dinners • Free parking

3 nights half board PLUS from £359pp

Bringing On Back The Good Times All Star 60s Party

Warner Bembridge, Isle of Wight
21 Sept, 2018 • Quote: BE9-KOS

Join us at Warner Bembridge as our summer of fun continues with a packed entertainment programme featuring 60s sensation Marty Wilde and The Wildcats, Steve Ellis supported by Vanity Fare and Union Gap UK. With Free drinks from 6pm to midnight every evening, great entertainment and a free car ferry crossing, here's a party to add extra sizzle to your summer.

INCLUDED: Free drinks 6pm to midnight every night - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & pumped mixers • Full entertainment programme • 3 nights en-suite chalet - upgrade to main hotel building available • 3 breakfasts & 3 dinners • Free car ferry • Free parking

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POPULAR: Renault Twingo Iconic Special Edition is the new range-topping version of the characterful city car. Pictures: Renault

Iconic special edition joins Renault's Twingo range

WITH the attraction of smaller cars getting bigger for motorists, Renault has added a new Iconic Special Edition version to the Twingo line-up.

This new range-topping option for the city car comes packed with standard equipment plus £2,825 worth of extra kit, saving £740.

It is set apart from the rest of the range with exclusive Iconic crosshatch-patterned part-leather seats, floor mats with a mint green Twingo motif and matching coloured accents around the cabin.

The Iconic gains a fabric folding sunroof in the same pattern as the interior, exclusive 16in alloy wheels, crosshatched Iconic side decals and electrically-folding door mirrors.

Technology includes R-Link satellite navigation, climate control, automatic headlights and wipers and electric front windows and electric heated mirrors. Front fog lights, DAB radio, Bluetooth, cruise control and speed limiter are all also a part of the Twingo Iconic package.

For those looking to personalise the Twingo Iconic front and side skirts, extended wheel arches and rear diffuser cost £250, lane departure warning £150 and heated front seats and front passenger Isofix point £250.

Under the boot floor of the rear-engined, rear-wheel drive Twingo Iconic Special Edition is a

0.9-litre, three-cylinder, turbo petrol engine, producing 90PS and 135Nm of torque, which makes it capable of 0-60mph in 10.8 seconds and 103mph flat out.

It's available with a choice of a five-speed manual or six-speed dual-clutch automatic gearboxes. The manual has economy and CO2 emission figures of 65.7mpg combined and 99g/km – for the automatic they are 58.9mpg and 108g/km.

Priced £14,595 for the manual and £15,515 for the automatic, the Twingo Iconic Special comes with Renault's four-year, 100,000-mile warranty.

KENT LIFE

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Crossland X-pands Vauxhall SUV range

Vauxhall's ever-growing SUV family has welcomed another new arrival, with the compact Crossland X crossover replacing the Meriva multi-purpose vehicle

MOTORING is taking a new direction with crossovers and sport utility vehicles all the rage at the expense of multi-purpose vehicles and people-carriers.

Vauxhall's Crossland X, an all-new compact crossover, replaces the Meriva MPV, as it becomes the latest marque to go for a three-model SUV family with the mid-range Mokka X also soon to be joined by a large Grandland X.

The Crossland X shares its running gear and engines with Citroen's new C3 Aircross, another compact crossover replacing the C3 Picasso MPV.

The Crossland X doesn't seem much smaller than Mokka X but is aimed at different customers. Front-wheel drive and 16cm shorter than Astra hatchback, it's more suited to urban driving.

Mokka X, also offered with all-wheel drive, is higher with larger wheels so better suited for getting off the beaten track.

The Citroen/Peugeot engines are 81PS and turbo 110 and 130PS 1.2-litre, three-cylinder petrol and 99 and 120PS 1.6-litre, four-cylinder turbo diesel.

The 110PS petrol engine will be popular and the only one offered with an automatic transmission option.

It needs to be worked to feel lively but still returned 45mpg.

The low-speed ride is seriously oversensitive to poor surfaces but improves with speed but never feels totally settled.

Handling is generally well mannered but the Crossland X is happiest scooting around in traffic rather than buzzing along B-roads.

If you're after a roomy, compact car, the Crossland X ticks all the boxes.

There's enough rear legroom for two large adults, although three in the back is a squeeze.

The deep boot is a class-leading 410 litres but, with entry SE model not having a height-adjustable boot floor panel, there's a tall sill and the 60/40 folded seat backs step up from the boot floor as the load bay grows to 1,255 litres.

Vauxhall has come into the compact crossover market late, and there are still a lot more models in the wings, but the Griffin badge and popularity of the bigger Mokka X will help make Crossland X a contender.

Vauxhall Crossland X

Price: **from £16,555**

Engine tested: **1,199cc, 110PS, three-cylinder turbo petrol with five-speed manual gearbox**

Performance: **0-62mph 10.6 seconds; top speed 117mph**

MPG: **Urban 50.4; extra urban 67.3; combined 58.9**

CO2 emissions: **109g/km**

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Official Government Test Environmental Data. Fuel consumption figures mpg (litres/100km) and CO_2 emissions (g/km). Astra SRi 1.4i Turbo (150PS): Urban: 38.7 (7.3), Extra-urban: 62.8 (4.5), Combined: 51.4 (5.5). CO_2 emissions: 128g/km.#

All of the following retailers are acting as a credit broker and not a lender: Go Motor Retailing Limited trading as Go Vauxhall Chislehurst, Go Motor Retailing Limited trading as Go Vauxhall Edenbridge, Go Motor Retailing Limited trading as Go Vauxhall Sevenoaks. We can introduce you to a limited number of finance providers, commission may be received.

*Offer subject to availability at participating Retailers only. Personal Contract Purchase. Finance subject to status, Ts&Cs apply. Applicants must be 18+. Finance by Vauxhall Finance, CF15 7YT. 24-48 month term available. Vauxhall Deposit Contribution only available when vehicle financed through Vauxhall Finance. At the end of the agreement there are three options: i) Pay the optional final payment to own the vehicle, ii) Return the vehicle, or iii) Replace: Part Exchange the vehicle where equity is available. UK-supplied vehicles only. Offer applies to private individuals, Vauxhall Partners and small businesses 1-24 units (purchase only excluding B2B supported units). All other customers are excluded. **Offer excludes Astra Design and Astra Tech Line.** Offers available on orders or registrations between 3 October and 18 December 2017. #Fuel consumption information is official government environmental data, tested in accordance with the relevant EU directive. Official EU regulated test data is provided for comparison purposes and actual performance will depend on driving style, road conditions and other non-technical factors. Vauxhall Motors Limited reserves the right to change, amend or withdraw this offer at any point in time. †Offer only on part-exchange for new passenger car orders from 3 October, which are subsequently registered by 31 December. On top of other offers excluding Scrappage, Partners and Associates discounts and B2B. The vehicle must be subject to an appraisal of its true condition at a Vauxhall participating Retailer. The offer will be £1,000 more than WeBuyAnyCar.Com's valuation based on the true appraisal. Participating Retailers only. Terms and Conditions apply. See Vauxhall.co.uk/webuyanycartoo. Correct at time of going to press.

LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

LICENSING ACT 2003:
Application for Premises Licence

Notice is hereby given that The Ballroom Ltd has applied to Canterbury City Council for the GRANT of a Premises Licence to operate the following Regulated Activities: Plays, films, live and recorded music, the performance of dance, indoor sporting events and the supply of alcohol on the premises only between 09.00 and 02.00hrs Monday to Saturday and on Sundays 9.00 and 00:00. Late Night Refreshment between 23.00 and 02.30hrs Monday to Saturday and on Sundays 23:00 and 00:30 with one extra hour for all Regulated Activities at the end of the day on the Sunday of the Easter Bank Holiday, the two May Bank Holidays and the August Bank Holiday. On New Year's Eve: to continue from the end of trading until the beginning of trading on New Year's Day; all at the following premises: The Ballroom, 15 Orange Street, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2JA. A register of licensing applications can be inspected at www.canterbury.gov.uk/licensing or at Council Offices, Military Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 1YW tel. 01227 862000 by appointment with the Licensing Team between 10am and 4pm Monday to Friday. Any person wishing to submit representations to this application must give notice in writing to the address shown above, giving in detail the grounds of objection by 31/10/2017. The Council will not entertain representations where the writer requests that their identity remains anonymous. Copies of all representations will be included in the papers presented to the Licensing Sub Committee and will therefore pass into the public domain. Representations must relate to one or more of the four Licensing Objectives: the prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, the prevention of public nuisance and the protection of children from harm.

LICENSING ACT 2003:
Application for Premises Licence

Notice is hereby given that Arben Saliu of Due Amici Ristorante, Hop Farm, Maidstone Road, Paddock Wood, Tonbridge TN12 6PY has applied to Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council for the GRANT of a premises licence for Live Music, recorded music every day from 17:00 hours until 02:00 hours. For late night refreshment everyday from 23:00 hours until 02:00 hours. For sale of alcohol everyday from 08:00 hours until 02:00 hours. Opening times every day from 08:00 hours until 02:30 hours for the Premises Hop Farm / Paddock Wood, TN12 6PY

Any person wishing to submit representations about the proposals should make them in writing to: Licensing Services, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4LZ giving in detail the grounds of objection by 01/11/2017

It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application. The maximum fine for which a person is liable on summary of conviction for the offence is £5000.

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RONALD PLAYFORD
(Deceased)

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of Hanningfield Retirement Home 99 London Road Sittingbourne Kent, who died on 18/04/2017, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Solicitors on or before 15/12/2017, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice. COUNTY SOLICITORS 29-31 High Street Rainham Kent ME8 7HX (Ref: PLA34/1)

RUSSELL ANDERSON YOUNG (Deceased)

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of 212 High Street Rainham Kent ME8 8AX, who died on 03/05/2017, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Solicitors on or before 15/12/2017, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice. COUNTY SOLICITORS 29-31 High Street Rainham Kent ME8 7HX (Ref: PLA34/1)

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Source: Loving Local Research 2011/Newspaper Society/Crowd DNA.
Base: All respondents. Sample: 4971

LOVING LOCAL

Spencer Private Hospitals are two hospitals situated in East Kent. The larger of the two hospitals is a 22 bed independent hospital situated at the QEQM Hospital in Margate, whilst the second hospital is a 4 bed independent hospital based at the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford. Both hospitals have a reputation for providing excellent medical and surgical facilities supported by Specialist Consultants, Specialist Nurses and Physiotherapists. We have state of the art diagnostic equipment and exceptionally high standards of nursing care.

The continuing growth of our business has resulted in a vacancy for the following staff:

Staff Nurse Ward (Margate)

Part Time – 30 hours per week **Salary – Dependent on experience**
Closing Date – TBC **Interview Date – TBC**

Qualifications and Experience

- Registered Nurse 1st level
- Evidence of continual professional development
- Experience in a surgical/medical environment with a knowledge and understanding of surgical/medical procedures
- Demonstrates a patient focus approach
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- Ability to work independently and as part of a multi-disciplinary team
- Committed to providing a quality clinical service

To discuss these opportunities, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact:
Liz Justice, Ward Manager on 01843 235012.

Business Office Administrator (Dover)

Full Time – 37.5 hours per week **Salary – £16,647.57 per annum**
Closing date – 12 October 2017 **Interview date – 19 October 2017**

Qualifications and Experience

- Mathematics and English (GCSE or equivalent) grade C or above
- 2+ years' experience in an administration environment
- Excellent IT Skills including use of Email, Internet and Microsoft Applications
- Organised and Methodical
- Excellent Customer Service Skills

Please note the interview will include a basic PC and aptitude test.

To discuss this opportunity, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact:
Gemma Preston, Business Office Manager, on 01304 222682, or
Joanna Hardman (Wed-Fri), Senior Business Office Administrator on 01304 222673.

Previous applicants need not apply

For job descriptions and application forms please visit our website:
www.spencerprivatehospitals.com/careers

Alternatively, please contact Daisy Bannister, HR Assistant
Telephone: 01304 222 690 or E-mail: recruitment@spencerhospitals.com

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National Crime Agency

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Project INVIGOR (vacancy reference - HP16575LW)

Location: Kent
Closing Date: Midday 12/10/2017
Salary: PIP1 or equivalent - £24,964 | PIP2 or equivalent – up to £30,626

Where existing Civil Servants apply on transfer to the NCA at the equivalent grade, pay principles on Civil Service transfers will apply. All other salary offers will be made within the advertised band.

Summary

The NCA leads the UK's fight to cut serious and organised crime including, people smuggling and human trafficking. Project INVIGOR is the NCA-led UK law enforcement Taskforce response to organised immigration crime (OIC). Opportunities now exist to join the Project INVIGOR Dedicated Investigation Team focussed on OIC, with the aims of pursuing and prosecuting those crime groups which present the most significant risk.

The Investigator role will include the handling of intelligence and the development of operational plans to tackle OIC, working with partner agencies, managing risk and gathering evidence to prosecute the individuals and gangs involved.

Candidates will be required to complete the NCA application form, providing a CV and a 750 word narrative providing examples of their experience of investigating serious and complex crime. Successful candidates should have PIP1 or equivalent investigative accreditation and recent experience and training in Criminal Procedures and Investigation Act 1996. Other desirable criteria would be PIP2 or equivalent accreditation, proven experience and accreditation in Suspect Interviewing, handling of exhibits and experience of applying for communications data under Regulations of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.

To apply: Please visit the NCA website www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/careers for further information and details on the application process.

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Vacancies

Estate Planning Consultant

Role: Estate Planning Consultant
Location: Kent area
Salary: Basic Salary + Un-capped Commission + Mileage

Heritage Will Writers are looking for a highly motivated individual with strong client focus to join our team based in the Kent area as an Estate Planning Consultant. The individual should be driven by a natural and honest quest to seek the best advice for our clients; this will require the applicant to develop their knowledge of the industry through continuous learning. The right applicant will be the face of the company and be based in the Kent area. You will be passionate about our company values and strive to ensure our clients future is safe guarded.

The successful candidate for the role of Estate Planning Consultant will have the following duties and responsibilities:

- Visiting new clients and existing clients in their homes, place of work or in the Heritage Offices advising them on estate planning solutions.
- Taking detailed instruction of Wills, Lasting Powers of Attorney and Trusts.
- Build and maintain strong working relationships with new and existing clients.
- Continuous training and development to ensure advice is relevant at all times.

In order to be considered for the role of Estate Planning Consultant you will have gained the following skills and experience:

- GCSE English & Math
- A-Levels (Desirable)
- University Degree (Desirable)
- Some commercial experience working in sales would be highly desirable
- The applicant will have a keen eye for detail, be a great listener and be passionate about the legal industry. Experience within the legal field is desirable, however not a necessity.
- Driving License and access to your own vehicle is essential
- Motivation, client focused and eager to learn are the key attributes for this role.
- Due to the nature of the job you will be looking at problems and formulating the best solution for the client, for that reason, evidence of problem solving and solution planning is advantageous.

In return you will benefit from working for a growing company in a role offering a competitive OTE and the opportunity to grow and develop in your career.

To apply for the role of Estate Planning Consultant please send an up to date cv to:
ocann@heritagewills.co.uk

Exhibition Stand Representative

Location: Kent area (mobile based role)
Hourly Rate: £7.50 p/h Plus Commission and Mileage
Position type: Part- time
(Thursday and Friday – 12 hour p/w contract)

Heritage Legal and Financial were established in 2001 and we have become East Anglia and the South East's leading dedicated Will writing service, serving tens of thousands of clients. As a result of company growth we currently have openings for an Exhibition Stand Representative to join our team and be based in the Norfolk area or around Harlow, Huntingdon, or Cambridge locality. You will plan and carry out sales activities on assigned areas. You will be responsible for informing of and displaying products to customers and managing service expectations, quality of product and service delivery in a face to face environment.

The successful candidate for the role of Exhibition Stand Representative will have the following duties and responsibilities:

- Generate and partially qualify leads whilst presenting a positive impression of Heritage
- Set up and collapse an Exhibition Stand
- Source and develop client referrals from face to face contact
- Ensure that you are available for all scheduled and planned Exhibition Stand events
- Assist in the development and maintain sales and promotional materials across all exhibition stands
- Attend and assist with all events that require an exhibition stand i.e County fairs and local events
- Develop and make presentations of company products and services to current and potential clients
- Maintain customer activity records and transfer these onto a bespoke database
- Ensure customer service satisfaction and good client relationships
- Monitor and report on engagement activities and follow up for management.

In return you will benefit from working for a growing company in a role offering part-time working hours and the opportunity to develop your skills and earn uncapped commission.

To apply for the role of Exhibition Stand Representative please send an up to date cv to:
atooth@heritagewills.co.uk

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WICKED

Beaumont makes award shortlist

The Kent batsman helped England win the World Cup in July

Cricket

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

KENT'S Tammy Beaumont has made the six-strong shortlist for the Sunday Times Sportswoman of the Year award.

The Dover-born batsman, who helped England win the World Cup earlier this summer, will be hoping to follow in the footsteps of fellow county athlete Dame Kelly Holmes, who is among the previous winners of the coveted gong.

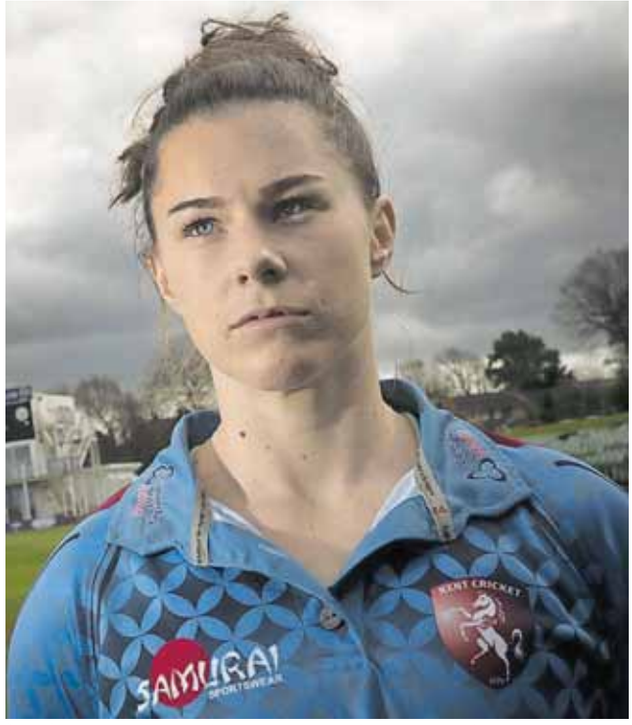
Laura Kenny, Dame Jessica Ennis-Hill, Charlotte Dujardin, Sally Gunnell, Denise Lewis, Christine Ohuruogu, Victoria Pendleton and Zara Tindall have all also experienced glory in recent years.

The awards, in association with Vitality, and now in their 30th year, have led the way in recognising and celebrating the outstanding contribution to sport made by elite athletes, coaches, administrators, community volunteers and inspirational women.

Beaumont is joined on the shortlist this year by cyclist Elinor Barker, speed-skater, Elise Christie, tennis player Johanna Konta, footballer Jodie Taylor and taekwondo star Bianca Walkden.

On the evening of Thursday, October 26, the awards will take place at the Hilton London Bankside hotel, with the ceremony broadcast live on Sky Sports, from 8pm to 9.30pm.

Other awards on the night will go to the Young Sportswoman of the Year, the Disabled Sportswoman of the Year and the Vitality Team of the Year.



STAR: Tammy Beaumont has been nominated alongside the likes Johanna Konta Pictures: ADY KERRY

The Helen Rollason Award for Inspiration and the Lifetime Achievement Award will also be announced, as will the Community Award which will honour an individual who has actively engaged different groups of people within their community through sport.

Neville Koopowitz, CEO of Vitality, said: "As well as recognising the achievements of elite sportswomen, the awards also draw well-deserved attention to those people who work tirelessly to support women's sport in their communities.

"All those nominated help inspire women of all ages to actively engage in sport and live a healthy life and we look forward to recognising their achievements later this month."

Dover to face Bromley in FA Cup qualifying

Football

DOVER Athletic will host Bromley in a Kent derby in the FA Cup next weekend after the draw for the fourth qualifying round was made on Monday.

Some seven teams from the county will feature in ties across the weekend of October 14-15, with the winners earning a place in the first round proper, where they will be joined by sides from both League One and League Two, including struggling Gillingham.

Dover and Bromley's National League rivals, Maidstone United, are also at home, having been drawn against Enfield Town at the Gallagher Stadium, while Margate will also have home advantage when they play Leatherhead, following an impressive win over neighbours Herne Bay at Hartsdown Park on Saturday.

HOME: Dover's Crabble

Elsewhere, high-flying Dartford travel to Burgess Hill Town, Ebbsfleet United will make the short trip over the Dartford Crossing to face either Harlow Town or East Thurrock United and Folkestone Invicta will visit Slough Town.

Kent sides have endured a difficult few years in the FA Cup, with not a single county outfit making it past the first round of the competition last season.

In the 2015/16 campaign, only Welling United progressed into the second round, but they were comprehensively beaten at home to Carlisle United.

However, Dover earned a glamour tie at home to Premier League side Crystal Palace in the third round in January 2015, where they too were beaten by four goals to nil.

East

Sport Shorts

» Email **sports@kosmedia.co.uk** or call **Tom Pyman** on **01233653477**

Stevens and Tredwell commit their futures

KENT stalwarts Darren Stevens and James Tredwell have put pen to paper on contract extensions with the club.

All-rounder Stevens, 41, who celebrated his Benefit Year in 2016, is Kent's all-time T20 top run-scorer and is closing in on 15,000 first class runs after passing 400 first class wickets in a prolific 2017 season - his best ever year with the ball, taking 63 first class wickets.

Spinner Tredwell, 35, was awarded a Testimonial Year in 2017, made his Kent debut in 2000 and will return for a 19th season in the new year.

Stevens said: "I'm still really enjoying my cricket and love playing for Kent. It'll be time to retire when I'm not getting runs and wickets.

"I'm still up for the challenge and I love competing with the youngsters. As long I've still got that fight, I'll play as long as I can."

Tredwell added: "Having come through the system at Kent, it's great to be part of the club trying to achieve our ambitions going forward."

LOYAL: New deals signed

HOMEGROWN: Bertrand (bottom-right) grew up in Gillingham

Bertrand makes case ahead of World Cup

FORMER Kent schoolboy Ryan Bertrand helped make his case for a spot on the plane to Russia next summer as England this week booked their place at the World Cup with a victory over Slovenia.

The Southampton defender completed the full 90 minutes in Thursday's 1-0 win at Wembley Stadium and with Tottenham's Danny Rose still sidelined with injury, the 28-year-old, for now at least, appears to be Gareth Southgate's first choice at left-back.

Bertrand came through the ranks at Gillingham and attended The Robert Napier School in the town before moving to Chelsea as a teenager.

Gills development manager Bryan Bull told us last year Bertrand was a player who "had it all".

F1 star Button to visit county

FORMULA 1 superstar Jenson Button will meet fans and sign copies of his new book at Bluewater later this month.

The British racer, who won the world title in 2009, will be signing copies of his autobiography - Life to the Limit - on October 21 at 1pm.

Having raced in more than 300 grand prix, Button is currently on a sabbatical from the sport that turned him into such a well known figure. He has the option to return next season.

Outside of racing in March 2010 he set up the Jenson Button Trust for his charity activities which includes the Jenson Button Triathlon, raising money for Help For Heroes, Cancer Research and now Barnardo's.

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